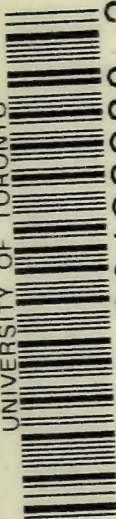


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ESSAYS

ETHICAL AND POLITICAL

BY

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

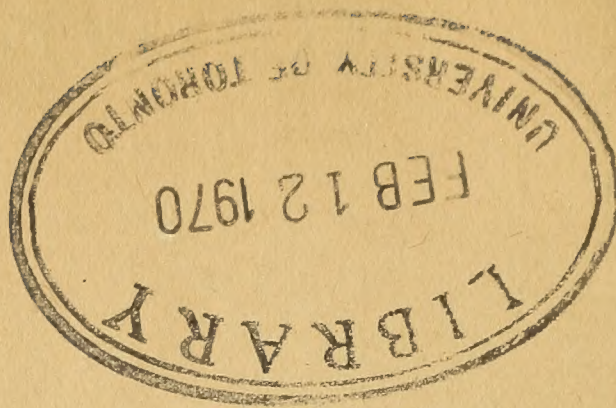
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ESSAYS

ETHICAL AND POLITICAL

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE IN HUMAN SOCIETY

[1888]

THE vast and varied procession of events, which we call Nature, affords a sublime spectacle and an inexhaustible wealth of attractive problems to the speculative observer. If we confine our attention to that aspect which engages the attention of the intellect, nature appears a beautiful and harmonious whole, the incarnation of faultless logical process, from certain premises in the past to an inevitable conclusion in the future. But if it be regarded from a less elevated, though more human, point of view; if our moral sympathies are allowed to influence our judgment, and we permit ourselves to criticise our great mother as we criticise one another; then our verdict, at least so far as sentient nature is concerned, can hardly be so favourable.

In sober truth, to those who have made a study of the phenomena of life as they are exhibited by the higher forms of the animal world, the optimistic dogma, that this is the best of all possible worlds, will seem little better than a libel upon possibility. It is really only another instance to be added to the many extant, of the audacity of *a priori* speculators who, having created God in their own image, find no difficulty in assuming that the Almighty must have been actuated by the same motives as themselves. They are quite sure that, had any other course been practicable, He would no more have made infinite

suffering a necessary ingredient of His handiwork than a respectable philosopher would have done the like.

But even the modified optimism of the time-honoured thesis of physico-theology, that the sentient world is, on the whole, regulated by principles of benevolence, does but ill stand the test of impartial confrontation with the facts of the case. No doubt it is quite true that sentient nature affords hosts of examples of subtle contrivances directed towards the production of pleasure or the avoidance of pain; and it may be proper to say that these are evidences of benevolence. But if so, why is it not equally proper to say of the equally numerous arrangements, the no less necessary result of which is the production of pain, that they are evidences of malevolence?

If a vast amount of that which, in a piece of human workmanship, we should call skill, is visible in those parts of the organisation of a deer to which it owes its ability to escape from beasts of prey, there is at least equal skill displayed in that bodily mechanism of the wolf which enables him to track, and sooner or later to bring down, the deer. Viewed under the dry light of science, deer and wolf are alike admirable; and, if both were non-sentient automata, there would be nothing to qualify our admiration of the action of the one on the other. But the fact that the deer suffers, while the wolf inflicts suffering, engages our moral sym-

pathies. We should call men like the deer innocent and good, men such as the wolf malignant and bad; we should call those who defended the deer and aided him to escape brave and compassionate, and those who helped the wolf in his bloody work base and cruel. Surely, if we transfer these judgments to nature outside the world of man at all, we must do so impartially. In that case, the goodness of the right hand which helps the deer, and the wickedness of the left hand which eggs on the wolf, will neutralise one another: and the course of nature will appear to be neither moral nor immoral, but non-moral.

This conclusion is thrust upon us by analogous facts in every part of the sentient world; yet, inasmuch as it not only jars upon prevalent prejudices, but arouses the natural dislike to that which is painful, much ingenuity has been exercised in devising an escape from it.

From the theological side, we are told that this is a state of probation, and that the seeming injustices and immoralities of nature will be compensated by and by. But how this compensation is to be effected, in the case of the great majority of sentient things, is not clear. I apprehend that no one is seriously prepared to maintain that the ghosts of all the myriads of generations of herbivorous animals which lived during the millions of years of the earth's duration, before the appearance of man, and which have all that time been tormented and devoured by carnivores, are to be compensated by a perennial existence in clover; while the ghosts of carnivores are to go to some kennel where there is neither a pan of water nor a bone with any meat on it. Besides, from the point of view of morality, the last stage of things would be worst than the first. For the carnivores, however brutal and sanguinary, have only done that which, if there is any evidence of contrivance in the world, they were expressly constructed to do. Moreover, carnivores and herbivores alike have been subject

to all the miseries incidental to old age, disease and over-multiplication, and both might well put in a claim for "compensation" on this score.

On the evolutionist side, on the other hand, we are told to take comfort from the reflection that the terrible struggle for existence tends to final good, and that the suffering of the ancestor is paid for by the increased perfection of the progeny. There would be something in this argument if, in Chinese fashion, the present generation could pay its debts to its ancestors; otherwise it is not clear what compensation the *Eohippus* gets for his sorrows in the fact that, some millions of years afterwards, one of his descendants wins the Derby. And, again, it is an error to imagine that evolution signifies a constant tendency to increased perfection. That process undoubtedly involves a constant remodelling of the organism in adaptation to new conditions; but it depends on the nature of those conditions whether the direction of the modifications effected shall be upward or downward. Retrogressive is as practicable as progressive metamorphosis. If what the physical philosophers tell us, that our globe has been in a state of fusion, and, like the sun, is gradually cooling down, is true; then the time must come when evolution will mean adaptation to an universal winter, and all forms of life will die out, except such low and simple organisms as the Diatom of the arctic and antarctic ice and the Protococcus of the red snow. If our globe is proceeding from a condition in which it was too hot to support any but the lowest living thing to a condition in which it will be too cold to permit of the existence of any others, the course of life upon its surface must describe a trajectory like that of a ball fired from a mortar; and the sinking half of that course is as much a part of the general process of evolution as the rising.

From the point of view of the moralist the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The crea-

tures are fairly well treated, and set to fight—whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight another day. The spectator has no need to turn his thumbs down, as no quarter is given. He must admit that the skill and training displayed are wonderful. But he must shut his eyes if he would not see that more or less enduring suffering is the meed of both vanquished and victor. And since the great game is going on in every corner of the world, thousands of times a minute; since, were our ears sharp enough, we need not descend to the gates of hell to hear—

sospiri, pianti, ed alti guai.

Voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle

—it seems to follow that, if this world is governed by benevolence, it must be a different sort of benevolence from that of John Howard.

But the old Babylonians wisely symbolised Nature by their great goddess Istar, who combined the attributes of Aphrodite with those of Ares. Her terrible aspect is not to be ignored or covered up with shams; but it is not the only one. If the optimism of Leibnitz is a foolish though pleasant dream, the pessimism of Schopenhauer is a nightmare, the more foolish because of its hideousness. Error which is not pleasant is surely the worst form of wrong.

This may not be the best of all possible worlds, but to say that it is the worst is mere petulant nonsense. A worn-out voluptuary may find nothing good under the sun, or a vain and inexperienced youth, who cannot get the moon he cries for, may vent his irritation in pessimistic moanings; but there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable person that mankind could, would, and in fact do, get on fairly well with vastly less happiness and far more misery than find their way into the lives of nine people out of ten. If each and all of us had been visited by an attack of neuralgia, or of extreme mental depression, for one

hour in every twenty-four—a supposition which many tolerably vigorous people know, to their cost, is not extravagant—the burden of life would have been immensely increased without much practical hindrance to its general course. Men with any manhood in them find life quite worth living under worse conditions than these.

There is another sufficiently obvious fact, which renders the hypothesis that the course of sentient nature is dictated by malevolence quite untenable. A vast multitude of pleasures, and these among the purest and the best, are superfluities, bits of good which are to all appearance unnecessary as inducements to live, and are, so to speak, thrown into the bargain of life. To those who experience them, few delights can be more entrancing than such as are afforded by natural beauty, or by the arts, and especially by music; but they are products of, rather than factors in, evolution, and it is probable that they are known, in any considerable degree, to but a very small proportion of mankind.

The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be that, if Ormuzd has not had his way in this world, neither has Ahri-man. Pessimism is as little consonant with the facts of sentient existence as optimism. If we desire to represent the course of nature in terms of human thought, and assume that it was intended to be that which it is, we must say that its governing principle is intellectual and not moral; that it is a materialised logical process, accompanied by pleasures and pains, the incidence of which, in the majority of cases, has not the slightest reference to moral desert. That the rain falls alike upon the just and the unjust, and that those upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell were no worse than their neighbours, seem to be Oriental modes of expressing the same conclusion.

In the strict sense of the word “nature,” it denotes the sum of the phenomenal world, of that which has been, and is, and will be; and society, like art,

is therefore a part of nature. But it is convenient to distinguish those parts of nature in which man plays the part of immediate cause, as something apart; and, therefore, society, like art, is usefully to be considered as distinct from nature. It is the more desirable, and even necessary, to make this distinction, since society differs from nature in having a definite moral object; whence it comes about that the course shaped by the ethical man—the member of society or citizen—necessarily runs counter to that which the non-ethical man—the primitive savage, or man as a mere member of the animal kingdom—tends to adopt. The latter fights out the struggle for existence to the bitter end, like any other animal; the former devotes his best energies to the object of setting limits to the struggle.¹

In the cycle of phenomena presented by the life of man, the animal, no more moral end is discernible than in that presented by the lives of the wolf and of the deer. However imperfect the relics of prehistoric men may be, the evidence which they afford clearly tends to the conclusion that, for thousands and thousands of years, before the origin of the oldest known civilisations, men were savages of a very low type. They strove with their enemies and their competitors; they preyed upon things weaker or less cunning than themselves; they were born, multiplied without stint, and died, for thousands of generations, alongside the mammoth, the urus, the lion, and the hyæna, whose lives were spent in the same way; and they were no more to be praised or blamed, on moral grounds, than their less erect and more hairy compatriots.

As among these, so among primitive men, the weakest and stupidest went to the wall, while the toughest and shrewdest, those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in any other sense, survived. Life was

a continual free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, the Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence. The human species, like others, plashed and floundered amid the general stream of evolution, keeping its head above water as it best might, and thinking neither of whence nor whither.

The history of civilisation—that is, of society—on the other hand, is the record of the attempts which the human race has made to escape from this position. The first men who substituted the state of mutual peace for that of mutual war, whatever the motive which impelled them to take that step, created society. But, in establishing peace, they obviously put a limit upon the struggle for existence. Between the members of that society, at any rate, it was not to be pursued *à outrance*. And of all the successive shapes which society has taken, that most nearly approaches perfection in which the war of individual against individual is most strictly limited. The primitive savage, tutored by Istar, appropriated whatever took his fancy, and killed whosoever opposed him, if he could. On the contrary, the ideal of the ethical man is to limit his freedom of action to a sphere in which he does not interfere with the freedom of others; he seeks the common weal as much as his own; and, indeed, as an essential part of his own welfare. Peace is both end and means with him; and he founds his life on a more or less complete self-restraint, which is the negation of the unlimited struggle for existence. He tries to escape from his place in the animal kingdom, founded on the free development of the principle of non-moral evolution, and to establish a kingdom of Man, governed upon the principle of moral evolution. For society not only has a moral end, but in its perfection, social life, is embodied morality.

But the effort of ethical man to work towards a moral end by no means abolished, perhaps has hardly modified,

¹ [The reader will observe that this is the argument of the Romanes Lecture, in brief.—1894.]

the deep-seated organic impulses which impel the natural man to follow his non-moral course. One of the most essential conditions, if not the chief cause, of the struggle for existence, is the tendency to multiply without limit, which man shares with all living things. It is notable that "increase and multiply" is a commandment traditionally much older than the ten; and that it is, perhaps, the only one which has been spontaneously and *ex animo* obeyed by the great majority of the human race. But, in civilised society, the inevitable result of such obedience is the re-establishment, in all its intensity, of that struggle for existence—the war of each against all—the mitigation or abolition of which was the chief end of social organisation.

It is conceivable that, at some period in the history of the fabled Atlantis, the production of food should have been exactly sufficient to meet the wants of the population, that the makers of the commodities of the artificers should have amounted to just the number supportable by the surplus food of the agriculturists. And, as there is no harm in adding another monstrous supposition to the foregoing, let it be imagined that every man, woman, and child was perfectly virtuous, and aimed at the good of all as the highest personal good. In that happy land, the natural man would have been finally put down by the ethical man. There would have been no competition, but the industry of each would have been serviceable to all; nobody being vain and nobody avaricious, there would have been no rivalries; the struggle for existence would have been abolished, and the millennium would have finally set in. But it is obvious that this state of things could have been permanent only with a stationary population. Add ten fresh mouths; and as, by the supposition, there was only exactly enough before, somebody must go on short rations. The Atlantis society might have been a heaven upon earth, the whole nation might have consisted of just men, needing no repentance, and yet some-

body must starve. Reckless Istar, non-moral Nature, would have riven the ethical fabric. I was once talking with a very eminent physician¹ about the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. "Stuff!" said he; "nine times out of ten nature does not want to cure the man: she wants to put him in his coffin." And Istar-Nature appears to have equally little sympathy with the ends of society. "Stuff! she wants nothing but a fair field and free play for her darling the strongest."

Our Atlantis may be an impossible figment, but the antagonistic tendencies which the fable adumbrates have existed in every society which was ever established, and, to all appearance, must strive for victory in all that will be. Historians point to the greed and ambition of rulers, to the reckless turbulence of the ruled, to the debasing effects of wealth and luxury, and to the devastating wars which have formed a great part of the occupation of mankind, as the causes of the decay of states and the foundering of old civilisations, and thereby point their story with a moral. No doubt immoral motives of all sorts have figured largely among the minor causes of these events. But beneath all this superficial turmoil lay the deep-seated impulse given by unlimited multiplication. In the swarms of colonies thrown out by Phœnicia and by old Greece; in the *ver sacrum* of the Latin races; in the floods of Gauls and of Teutons which burst over the frontiers of the old civilisation of Europe; in the swaying to and fro of the vast Mongolian hordes in late times, the population problem comes to the front in a very visible shape. Nor is it less plainly manifest in the everlasting agrarian questions of ancient Rome than in the Arreoi societies of the Polynesian Islands.

In the ancient world, and in a large part of that in which we live, the practice of infanticide was, or is, a regular and legal custom; famine, pestilence, and war were and are normal

¹ The late Sir W. Gull.

factors in the struggle for existence, and they have served, in a gross and brutal fashion, to mitigate the intensity of the effects of its chief cause.

But, in the more advanced civilisations, the progress of private and public morality has steadily tended to remove all these checks. We declare infanticide murder, and punish it as such; we decree, not quite so successfully, that no one shall die of hunger; we regard death from preventible causes of other kinds as a sort of constructive murder, and eliminate pestilence to the best of our ability; we declaim against the curse of war, and the wickedness of the military spirit, and we are never weary of dilating on the blessedness of peace and the innocent beneficence of Industry. In their moments of expansion, even statesmen and men of business go thus far. The finer spirits look to an ideal *civitas Dei*; a state when every man having reached the point of absolute self-negation, and having nothing but moral perfection to strive after, peace will truly reign, not merely among nations, but among men, and the struggle for existence will be at an end.

Whether human nature is competent, under any circumstances, to reach, or even seriously advance towards, this ideal condition, is a question which need not be discussed. It will be admitted that mankind has not yet reached this stage by a very long way, and my business is with the present. And that which I wish to point out is that, so long as the natural man increases and multiplies without restraint, so long will peace and industry not only permit, but they will necessitate, a struggle for existence as sharp as any that ever went on under the *régime* of war. If Istar is to reign on the one hand, she will demand her human sacrifices on the other.

Let us look at home. For seventy years peace and industry have had their way among us with less interruption and under more favourable conditions than in any other country on the face of the earth. The wealth of Croesus was no-

thing to that which we have accumulated, and our prosperity has filled the world with envy. But Nemesis did not forget Croesus: has she forgotten us?

I think not. There are now 36,000,000 of people in our islands, and every year considerably more than 300,000 are added to our numbers.¹ That is to say, about every hundred seconds, or so, a new claimant to a share in the common stock of maintenance presents him or herself among us. At the present time, the produce of the soil does not suffice to feed half its population. The other moiety has to be supplied with food which must be bought from the people of food-producing countries. That is to say, we have to offer them the things which they want in exchange for the things we want. And the things they want and which we can produce better than they can are mainly manufactures—industrial products.

The insolent reproach of the first Napoleon had a very solid foundation. We not only are, but, under penalty of starvation, we are bound to be, a nation of shopkeepers. But other nations also lie under the same necessity of keeping shop, and some of them deal in the same goods as ourselves. Our customers naturally seek to get the most and the best in exchange for their produce. If our goods are inferior to those of our competitors, there is no ground, compatible with the sanity of the buyers, which can be alleged, why they should not prefer the latter. And, if that result should ever take place on a large and general scale, five or six millions of us would soon have nothing to eat. We know what the cotton famine was; and we can therefore form some notion of what a dearth of customers would be.

Judged by an ethical standard, nothing can be less satisfactory than the position

¹ These numbers are only approximately accurate. In 1881, our population amounted to 35,241,482, exceeding the number in 1871 by 3,396,103. The average annual increase in the decennial period 1871—1881 is therefore 339,610. The number of minutes in a calendar year is 525,600.

in which we find ourselves. In a real, though incomplete, degree we have attained the condition of peace which is the main object of social organisation; and, for argument's sake, it may be assumed that we desire nothing but that which is in itself innocent and praiseworthy—namely, the enjoyment of the fruits of honest industry. And lo! in spite of ourselves, we are in reality engaged in an internecine struggle for existence with our presumably no less peaceful and well-meaning neighbours. We seek peace and we do not ensue it. The moral nature in us asks for no more than is compatible with the general good; the non-moral nature proclaims and acts upon that fine old Scottish family motto, "Thou shalt starve ere I want." Let us be under no illusions, then. So long as unlimited multiplication goes on, no social organisation which has ever been devised, or is likely to be devised, no fiddle-faddling with the distribution of wealth, will deliver society from the tendency to be destroyed by the reproduction within itself, in its intensest form, of that struggle for existence the limitation of which is the object of society. And however shocking to the moral sense this eternal competition of man against man and of nation against nation may be; however revolting may be the accumulation of misery at the negative pole of society, in contrast with that of monstrous wealth at the positive pole;¹ this state of things must abide, and grow continually worse, so long as Istar holds her way unchecked. It is the true riddle of the Sphinx; and every nation which does not solve it will sooner or later be devoured by the monster itself has generated.

The practical and pressing question for us, just now, seems to me to be how to gain time. "Time brings counsel," as the Teutonic proverb has it; and wiser folk among our posterity may see

¹ [It is hard to say whether the increase of the unemployed poor, or that of the unemployed rich, is the greater social evil.—1894.]

their way out of that which at present looks like an *impasse*.

It would be folly to entertain any ill-feeling towards those neighbours and rivals who, like ourselves, are slaves of Istar; but, if somebody is to be starved, the modern world has no oracle of Delphi to which the nations can appeal for an indication of the victim. It is open to us to try our fortune; and, if we avoid impending fate, there will be a certain ground for believing that we are the right people to escape. *Securus judicat orbis*.

To this end, it is well to look into the necessary conditions of our salvation by works. They are two, one plain to all the world and hardly needing insistence; the other seemingly not so plain, since too often it has been theoretically and practically left out of sight. The obvious condition is that our produce shall be better than that of others. There is only one reason why our goods should be preferred to those of our rivals—our customers must find them better at the price. That means that we must use more knowledge, skill, and industry in producing them, without a proportionate increase in the cost of production; and, as the price of labour constitutes a large element in that cost, the rate of wages must be restricted within certain limits. It is perfectly true that cheap production and cheap labour are by no means synonymous; but it is also true that wages cannot increase beyond a certain proportion without destroying cheapness. Cheapness, then, with, as part and parcel of cheapness, a moderate price of labour, is essential to our success as competitors in the markets of the world.

The second condition is really quite as plainly indispensable as the first, if one thinks seriously about the matter. It is social stability. Society is stable, when the wants of its members obtain as much satisfaction as, life being what it is, common sense and experience show may be reasonably expected. Mankind, in general, care very little for forms of government or ideal considerations of any sort; and nothing really stirs the

great multitude to break with custom and incur the manifest perils of revolt except the belief that misery in this world, or damnation in the next, or both, are threatened by the continuance of the state of things in which they have been brought up. But when they do attain that conviction, society becomes as unstable as a package of dynamite, and a very small matter will produce the explosion which sends it back to the chaos of savagery.

It needs no argument to prove that when the price of labour sinks below a certain point, the worker infallibly falls into that condition which the French emphatically call *la misère*—a word for which I do not think there is any exact English equivalent. It is a condition in which the food, warmth, and clothing which are necessary for the mere maintenance of the functions of the body in their normal state cannot be obtained; in which men, women, and children are forced to crowd into dens wherein decency is abolished and the most ordinary conditions of healthful existence are impossible of attainment; in which the pleasures within reach are reduced to bestiality and drunkenness; in which the pains accumulate at compound interest, in the shape of starvation, disease, stunted development, and moral degradation; in which the prospect of even steady and honest industry is a life of unsuccessful battling with hunger, rounded by a pauper's grave.

That a certain proportion of the members of every great aggregation of mankind should constantly tend to establish and populate such a Slough of Despond as this is inevitable, so long as some people are by nature idle and vicious, while others are disabled by sickness or accident, or thrown upon the world by the death of their bread-winners. So long as that proportion is restricted within tolerable limits, it can be dealt with; and, so far as it arises only from such causes, its existence may and must be patiently borne. But, when the organisation of society, instead of mitigating

this tendency, tends to continue and intensify it; when a given social order plainly makes for evil and not for good, men naturally enough begin to think it high time to try a fresh experiment. The animal man, finding that the ethical man has landed him in such a slough, resumes his ancient sovereignty, and preaches anarchy; which is, substantially, a proposal to reduce the social cosmos to chaos, and begin the brute struggle for existence once again.

Any one who is acquainted with the state of the population of all great industrial centres, whether in this or other countries, is aware that, amidst a large and increasing body of that population, *la misère* reigns supreme. I have no pretensions to the character of a philanthropist, and I have a special horror of all sorts of sentimental rhetoric; I am merely trying to deal with facts, to some extent within my own knowledge, and further evidenced by abundant testimony, as a naturalist; and I take it to be a mere plain truth that, throughout industrial Europe, there is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a vast mass of people whose condition is exactly that described; and from a still greater mass who, living just on the edge of the social swamp, are liable to be precipitated into it by any lack of demand for their produce. And, with every addition to the population, the multitude already sunk in the pit and the number of the hosts sliding towards it continually increase.

Argumentation can hardly be needful to make it clear that no society in which the elements of decomposition are thus swiftly and surely accumulating can hope to win in the race of industries.

Intelligence, knowledge, and skill are undoubtedly conditions of success; but of what avail are they likely to be unless they are backed up by honesty, energy, goodwill, and all the physical and moral faculties that go to the making of manhood, and unless they are stimulated by hope of such reward as men may fairly look to? And what dweller in the slough of want, dwarfed in body and soul,

demoralised, hopeless, can reasonably be expected to possess these qualities?

Any full and permanent development of the productive powers of an industrial population, then, must be compatible with and, indeed, based upon a social organisation which will secure a fair amount of physical and moral welfare to that population; which will make for good and not for evil. Natural science and religious enthusiasm rarely go hand in hand, but on this matter their concord is complete; and the least sympathetic of naturalists can but admire the insight and the devotion of such social reformers as the late Lord Shaftesbury, whose recently published "Life and Letters" gives a vivid picture of the condition of the working classes fifty years ago, and of the pit which our industry, ignoring these plain truths, was then digging under its own feet.

There is, perhaps, no more hopeful sign of progress among us, in the last half-century, than the steadily increasing devotion which has been and is directed to measures for promoting physical and moral welfare among the poorer classes. Sanitary reformers, like most other reformers whom I have had the advantage of knowing, seem to need a good dose of fanaticism, as a sort of moral coca, to keep them up to the mark, and, doubtless, they have made many mistakes; but that the endeavour to improve the condition under which our industrial population live, to amend the drainage of densely peopled streets, to provide baths, washhouses, and gymnasia, to facilitate habits of thrift, to furnish some provision for instruction and amusement in public libraries and the like, is not only desirable from a philanthropic point of view, but an essential condition of safe industrial development, appears to me to be indisputable. It is by such means alone, so far as I can see, that we can hope to check the constant gravitation of industrial society towards *la misère*, until the general progress of intelligence and morality leads men to grapple with the sources of that tendency.

If it is said that the carrying out of such arrangements as those indicated must enhance the cost of production, and thus handicap the producer in the race of competition, I venture, in the first place, to doubt the fact; but if it be so, it results that industrial society has to face a dilemma, either alternative of which threatens destruction.

On the one hand, a population the labour of which is sufficiently remunerated may be physically and morally healthy and socially stable, but may fail in industrial competition by reason of the dearness of its produce. On the other hand, a population the labour of which is insufficiently remunerated must become physically and morally unhealthy, and socially unstable; and though it may succeed for a while in industrial competition, by reason of the cheapness of its produce, it must in the end fall, through hideous misery and degradation, to utter ruin.

Well, if these are the only possible alternatives, let us for ourselves and our children choose the former, and, if need be, starve like men. But I do not believe that a stable society made up of healthy, vigorous, instructed, and self-ruling people would ever incur serious risk of that fate. They are not likely to be troubled with many competitors of the same character, just yet; and they may be safely trusted to find ways of holding their own.

Assuming that the physical and moral well-being and the stable social order, which are the indispensable conditions of permanent industrial development, are secured, there remains for consideration the means of attaining that knowledge and skill without which, even then, the battle of competition cannot be successfully fought. Let us consider how we stand. A vast system of elementary education has now been in operation among us for sixteen years, and has reached all but a very small fraction of the population. I do not think that there is any room for doubt that, on the whole, it has worked well, and

that its indirect no less than its direct benefits have been immense. But, as might be expected, it exhibits the defects of all our educational systems—fashioned as they were to meet the wants of a by-gone condition of society. There is a widespread and, I think, well-justified complaint that it has too much to do with books and too little to do with things. I am as little disposed as anyone can well be to narrow early education and to make the primary school a mere annexe of the shop. And it is not so much in the interests of industry, as in that of breadth of culture, that I echo the common complaint against the bookish and theoretical character of our primary instruction.

If there were no such things as industrial pursuits, a system of education which does nothing for the faculties of observation, which trains neither the eye nor the hand, and is compatible with utter ignorance of the commonest natural truths, might still be reasonably regarded as strangely imperfect. And when we consider that the instruction and training which are lacking are exactly those which are of most importance for the great mass of our population, the fault becomes almost a crime, the more that there is no practical difficulty in making good these defects. There really is no reason why drawing should not be universally taught, and it is an admirable training for both eye and hand. Artists are born, not made; but everybody may be taught to draw elevations, plans, and sections; and pots and pans are as good, indeed better, models for this purpose than the Apollo Belvedere. The plant is not expensive; and there is this excellent quality about drawing of the kind indicated, that it can be tested almost as easily and severely as arithmetic. Such drawings are either right or wrong, and if they are wrong the pupil can be made to see that they are wrong. From the industrial point of view, drawing has the further merit that there is hardly any trade in which the power of drawing is not of daily and hourly utility. In the

next place, no good reason, except the want of capable teachers, can be assigned why elementary notions of science should not be an element in general instruction. In this case, again, no expensive or elaborate apparatus is necessary. The commonest thing—a candle, a boy's squirt—a piece of chalk, in the hands of a teacher who knows his business, may be made the starting-points whence children may be led into the regions of science as far as their capacity permits, with efficient exercise of their observational and reasoning faculties on the road. If object lessons often prove trivial failures, it is not the fault of object lessons, but that of the teacher, who has not found out how much the power of teaching a little depends on knowing a great deal, and that thoroughly; and that he has not made that discovery is not the fault of the teachers, but of the detestable system of training them which is widely prevalent.¹

As I have said, I do not regard the proposal to add these to the present subjects of universal instruction as made merely in the interests of industry. Elementary science and drawing are just as needful at Eton (where I am happy to say both are now parts of the regular course) as in the lowest primary school. But their importance in the education of the artisan is enhanced, not merely by the fact that the knowledge and skill thus gained—little as they may amount to—will still be of practical utility to him; but, further, because they constitute an introduction to that special training which is commonly called "technical education."

I conceive that our wants in this last direction may be grouped under four heads: (1) Instruction in the principles of those branches of science and of art

¹ Training in the use of simple tools is no doubt very desirable on all grounds. From the point of view of "culture," the man whose "fingers are all thumbs" is but a stunted creature. But the practical difficulties in the way of introducing handiwork of this kind into elementary schools appear to me to be considerable.

which are peculiarly applicable to industrial pursuits, which may be called preliminary scientific education. (2) Instruction in the special branches of such applied science and art, as technical education proper. (3) Instruction of teachers in both these branches. (4) Capacity-catching machinery.

A great deal has already been done in each of these directions, but much remains to be done. If elementary education is amended in the way that has been suggested, I think that the school-boards will have quite as much on their hands as they are capable of doing well. The influences under which the members of these bodies are elected do not tend to secure fitness for dealing with scientific or technical education; and it is the less necessary to burden them with an uncongenial task, as there are other organisations, not only much better fitted to do the work, but already actually doing it.

In the matter of preliminary scientific education, the chief of these is the Science and Art Department, which has done more during the last quarter of a century for the teaching of elementary science among the masses of the people than any organisation which exists either in this or in any other country. It has become veritably a people's university, so far as physical science is concerned. At the foundation of our old universities they were freely open to the poorest, but the poorest must come to them. In the last quarter of a century, the Science and Art Department, by means of its classes spread all over the country and open to all, has conveyed instruction to the poorest. The University Extension movement shows that our older learned corporations have discovered the propriety of following suit.

Technical education, in the strict sense, has become a necessity for two reasons. The old apprenticeship system has broken down, partly by reason of the changed conditions of industrial life, and partly because trades have ceased to be "crafts," the traditional

secrets whereof the master handed down to his apprentices. Invention is constantly changing the face of our industries, so that "use and wont," "rule of thumb," and the like, are gradually losing their importance, while that knowledge of principles which alone can deal successfully with changed conditions is becoming more and more valuable. Socially, the "master" of four or five apprentices is disappearing in favour of the "employer" of forty, or four hundred, or four thousand "hands," and the odds and ends of technical knowledge, formerly picked up in a shop, are not, and cannot be, supplied in a factory. The instruction formerly given by the master must therefore be more than replaced by the systematic teaching of the technical school.

Institutions of this kind on varying scales of magnitude and completeness, from the splendid edifice set up by the City and Guilds Institute to the smallest local technical school, to say nothing of classes, such as those in technology instituted by the Society of Arts (subsequently taken over by the City Guilds), have been established in various parts of the country, and the movement in favour of their increase and multiplication is rapidly growing in breadth and intensity. But there is much difference of opinion as to the best way in which the technical instruction, so generally desired, should be given. Two courses appear to be practicable: the one is the establishment of special technical schools with a systematic and lengthened course of instruction demanding the employment of the whole time of the pupils. The other is the setting afoot of technical classes, especially evening classes, comprising a short series of lessons on some special topic, which may be attended by persons already earning wages in some branch of trade or commerce.

There is no doubt that technical schools, on the plan indicated under the first head, are extremely costly; and, so far as the teaching of artisans is concerned, it is very commonly objected to

them that, as the learners do not work under trade conditions, they are apt to fall into amateurish habits, which prove of more hindrance than service in the actual business of life. When such schools are attached to factories under the direction of an employer who desires to train up a supply of intelligent workmen, of course this objection does not apply; nor can the usefulness of such schools for the training of future employers and for the higher grade of the employed be doubtful; but they are clearly out of the reach of the great mass of the people, who have to earn their bread as soon as possible. We must therefore look to the classes, and especially to evening classes, as the great instrument for the technical education of the artisan. The utility of such classes has now been placed beyond all doubt; the only question which remains is to find the ways and means of extending them.

We are here, as in all other questions of social organisation, met by two diametrically opposed views. On the one hand, the methods pursued in foreign countries are held up as our example. The State is exhorted to take the matter in hand, and establish a great system of technical education. On the other hand, many economists of the individualist school exhaust the resources of language in condemning and repudiating, not merely the interference of the general government in such matters, but the application of a farthing of the funds raised by local taxation to these purposes. I entertain a strong conviction that, in this country, at any rate, the State had much better leave purely technical and trade instruction alone. But, although my personal leanings are decidedly towards the individualists, I have arrived at that conclusion on merely practical grounds. In fact, my individualism is rather of a sentimental sort, and I sometimes think I should be stronger in the faith if it were less vehemently advocated.¹ I am unable to see that civil

society is anything but a corporation established for a moral object—namely, the good of its members—and therefore that it may take such measures as seem fitting for the attainment of that which the general voice decides to be the general good. That the suffrage of the majority is by no means a scientific test of social good and evil is unfortunately too true; but, in practice, it is the only test we can apply, and the refusal to abide by it means anarchy. The purest despotism that ever existed is as much based upon that will of the majority (which is usually submission to the will of a small minority) as the freest republic. Law is the expression of the opinion of the majority; and it is law, and not mere opinion, because the many are strong enough to enforce it.

I am as strongly convinced as the most pronounced individualist can be, that it is desirable that every man should be free to act in every way which does not limit the corresponding freedom of his fellow-man. But I fail to connect that great induction of political science with the practical corollary which is frequently drawn from it: that the State—that is, the people in their corporate capacity—has no business to meddle with anything but the administration of justice and external defence. It appears to me that the amount of freedom which incorporate society may fitly leave to its members is not a fixed quantity, to be determined *a priori* by deduction from the fiction called “natural rights”; but that it must be determined by, and vary with, circumstances. I conceive it to be demonstrable that the higher and the more complex the organisation of the social body, the more closely is the life of each member bound up with that of the whole; and the larger becomes the category of acts which cease to be merely emphasising opinions which I expressed seventeen years ago, in an Address to the members of the Midland Institute (republished in *Critiques and Addresses* in 1873, and in Vol. I. of these *Essays*). I have seen no reason to modify them, notwithstanding high authority on the other side.

¹ In what follows I am only repeating and

self-regarding, and which interfere with the freedom of others more or less seriously.

If a squatter, living ten miles away from any neighbour, chooses to burn his house down to get rid of vermin, there may be no necessity (in the absence of insurance offices) that the law should interfere with his freedom of action; his act can hurt nobody but himself. But, if the dweller in the street chooses to do the same thing, the State very properly makes such a proceeding a crime, and punishes it as such. He does meddle with his neighbour's freedom, and that seriously. So it might, perhaps, be a tenable doctrine, that it would be needless, and even tyrannous, to make education compulsory in a sparse agricultural population, living in abundance on the produce of its own soil; but, in a densely populated manufacturing country, struggling for existence with competitors, every ignorant person tends to become a burden upon, and, so far, an infringer of the liberty of, his fellows, and an obstacle to their success. Under such circumstances an education rate is, in fact, a war tax, levied for purposes of defence.

That State action has always been more or less misdirected, and always will be so, is, I believe, perfectly true. But I am not aware that it is more true of the action of men in their corporate capacity than it is of the doings of individuals. The wisest and most dispassionate man in existence, merely wishing to go from one stile in a field to the opposite, will not walk quite straight—he is always going a little wrong, and always correcting himself; and I can only congratulate the individualist who is able to say that his general course of life has been of a less undulatory character. To abolish State action, because its direction is never more than approximately correct, appears to me to be much the same thing as abolishing the man at the wheel altogether, because, do what he will, the ship yaws more or less. "Why should I be robbed of my property to pay for teaching another man's children?" is an

individualist question, which is not unfrequently put as if it settled the whole business. Perhaps it does, but I find difficulties in seeing why it should. The parish in which I live makes me pay my share for the paving and lighting of a great many streets that I never pass through; and I might plead that I am robbed to smooth the way and lighten the darkness of other people. But I am afraid the parochial authorities would not let me off on this plea; and I must confess I do not see why they should.

I cannot speak of my own knowledge, but I have every reason to believe that I came into this world a small reddish person, certainly without a gold spoon in my mouth, and in fact with no discernible abstract or concrete "rights" or property of any description. If a foot was not set upon me, at once, as a squalling nuisance, it was either the natural affection of those about me, which I certainly had done nothing to deserve, or the fear of the law which, ages before my birth, was painfully built up by the society into which I intruded, that prevented that catastrophe. If I was nourished, cared for, taught, saved from the vagabondage of a wastrel, I certainly am not aware that I did anything to deserve those advantages. And, if I possess anything now, it strikes me that, though I may have fairly earned my day's wages for my day's work, and may justly call them my property—yet, without that organisation of society, created out of the toil and blood of long generations before my time, I should probably have had nothing but a flint axe and an indifferent hut to call my own; and even those would be mine only so long as no stronger savage came my way.

So that if society, having, quite gratuitously, done all these things for me, asks me in turn to do something towards its preservation—even if that something is to contribute to the teaching of other men's children—I really, in spite of all my individualist leanings, feel rather ashamed to say no. And if I were not

ashamed, I cannot say that I think that society would be dealing unjustly with me in converting the moral obligation into a legal one. There is a manifest unfairness in letting all the burden be borne by the willing horse.

It does not appear to me, then, that there is any valid objection to taxation for purposes of education ; but, in the case of technical schools and classes, I think it is practically expedient that such a taxation should be local. Our industrial population accumulates in particular towns and districts ; these districts are those which immediately profit by technical education ; and it is only in them that we can find the men practically engaged in industries, among whom some may reasonably be expected to be competent judges of that which is wanted, and of the best means of meeting the want.

In my belief, all methods of technical training are at present tentative, and, to be successful, each must be adapted to the special peculiarities of its locality. This is a case in which we want twenty years, not of "strong government," but of cheerful and hopeful blundering ; and we may be thankful if we get things straight in that time.

The principle of the Bill introduced, but dropped, by the Government last session, appears to me to be wise, and some of the objections to it I think are due to a misunderstanding. The Bill proposed in substance to allow localities to tax themselves for purposes of technical education—on the condition that any scheme for such purpose should be submitted to the Science and Art Department, and declared by that department to be in accordance with the intention of the Legislature.

A cry was raised that the Bill proposed to throw technical education into the hands of the Science and Art Department. But, in reality, no power of initiation, nor even of meddling with details, was given to that Department—the sole function of which was to decide whether any plan proposed did or did not come within the limits of

"technical education." The necessity for such control, somewhere, is obvious. No legislature, certainly not ours, is likely to grant the power of self-taxation without setting limits to that power in some way ; and it would neither have been practicable to devise a legal definition of technical education, nor commendable to leave the question to the Auditor-General, to be fought out in the law-courts. The only alternative was to leave the decision to an appropriate State authority. If it is asked, what is the need of such control if the people of the localities are the best judges, the obvious reply is that there are localities and localities, and that while Manchester, or Liverpool, or Birmingham, or Glasgow might, perhaps, be safely left to do as they thought fit, smaller towns, in which there is less certainty of full discussion by competent people of different ways of thinking, might easily fall a prey to crotcheteers.

Supposing our intermediate science teaching and our technical schools and classes are established, there is yet a third need to be supplied, and that is the want of good teachers. And it is necessary not only to get them, but to keep them when you have got them.

It is impossible to insist too strongly upon the fact that efficient teachers of science and of technology are not to be made by the processes in vogue at ordinary training colleges. The memory loaded with mere bookwork is not the thing wanted—is, in fact, rather worse than useless—in the teacher of scientific subjects. It is absolutely essential that his mind should be full of knowledge and not of mere learning, and that what he knows should have been learned in the laboratory rather than in the library. There are happily already, both in London and in the provinces, various places in which such training is to be had, and the main thing at present is to make it in the first place accessible, and in the next indispensable, to those who undertake the business of teaching. But when the well-trained men are supplied, it

must be recollected that the profession of teacher is not a very lucrative or otherwise tempting one, and that it may be advisable to offer special inducements to good men to remain in it. These, however, are questions of detail into which it is unnecessary to enter further.

Last, but not least, comes the question of providing the machinery for enabling those who are by nature specially qualified to undertake the higher branches of industrial work, to reach the position in which they may render that service to the community. If all our educational expenditure did nothing but pick one man of scientific or inventive genius, each year, from amidst the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and give him the chance of making the best of his inborn faculties, it would be a very good investment. If there is one such child among the hundreds of thousands of our annual increase, it would be worth any money to drag him either from the slough of misery, or from the hotbed of wealth, and teach him to devote himself to the service of his people. Here, again, we have made a beginning with our scholarships and the like, and need only follow in the tracks already worn.

The programme of industrial development briefly set forth in the preceding pages is not what Kant calls a "Hirngespinnst," a cobweb spun in the brain of a Utopian philosopher. More or less of it has taken bodily shape in many parts of the country, and there are towns of no great size or wealth in the manufacturing districts (Keighley, for example) in which almost the whole of it has, for

some time, been carried out, so far as the means at the disposal of the energetic and public-spirited men who have taken the matter in hand permitted. The thing can be done; I have endeavoured to show good grounds for the belief that it must be done, and that speedily, if we wish to hold our own in the war of industry. I doubt not that it will be done, whenever its absolute necessity becomes as apparent to all those who are absorbed in the actual business of industrial life as it is to some of the lookers on.

[Perhaps it is necessary for me to add that technical education is not here proposed as a panacea for social diseases, but simply as a medicament which will help the patient to pass through an imminent crisis.

An ophthalmic surgeon may recommend an operation for cataract in a man who is going blind, without being supposed to undertake that it will cure him of gout. And I may pursue the metaphor so far as to remark, that the surgeon is justified in pointing out that a diet of pork-chops and burgundy will probably kill his patient, though he may be quite unable to suggest a mode of living which will free him from his constitutional disorder.

Mr. Booth asks me, Why do you not propose some plan of your own? Really, that is no answer to my argument that his treatment will make the patient very much worse. (Note added in *Social Diseases and Worse Remedies*, January, 1891.)]

PREFACE

THE discourse on "Evolution and Ethics," reprinted in the first half of the present volume, was delivered before the University of Oxford, as the second of the annual lectures founded by Mr. Romanes : whose name I may not write without deploring the untimely death, in the flower of his age, of a friend endeared to me, as to so many others, by his kindly nature ; and justly valued by all his colleagues for his powers of investigation and his zeal for the advancement of knowledge. I well remember, when Mr. Romanes' early work came into my hands, as one of the secretaries of the Royal Society, how much I rejoiced in the accession to the ranks of the little army of workers in science of a recruit so well qualified to take a high place among us.

It was at my friend's urgent request that I agreed to undertake the lecture, should I be honoured with an official proposal to give it, though I confess not without misgivings, if only on account of the serious fatigue and hoarseness which public speaking has for some years caused me ; while I knew that it would be my fate to follow the most accomplished and facile orator of our time, whose indomitable youth is in no matter more manifest than in his penetrating and musical voice. A certain saying about comparisons intruded itself somewhat importunately.

And even if I disregarded the weakness of my body in the matter of voice, and that of my mind in the matter of vanity, there remained a third difficulty. For several reasons, my attention, during a number of years, has been much directed to the bearing of modern scientific thought on the problems of morals and of politics, and I did not care to be diverted from that topic. Moreover, I thought it the most important and the worthiest which, at the present time, could engage the attention even of an ancient and renowned University.

But it is a condition of the Romanes foundation that the lecturer shall abstain from treating of either Religion or Politics ; and it appeared to me that, more than most, perhaps, I was bound to act, not merely up to the letter, but in the spirit, of that prohibition. Yet Ethical Science is, on all sides, so entangled with Religion and Politics, that the lecturer who essays to touch the former without coming into contact with either of the latter, needs all the dexterity of an egg-dancer ; and may even discover that his sense of clearness and his sense of propriety come into conflict, by no means to the advantage of the former.

I had little notion of the real magnitude of these difficulties when I set about my task ; but I am consoled for my pains and anxiety by observing that none of the multitudinous criticisms with which I have been favoured and, often, instructed, find fault with me on the score of having strayed out of bounds.

Among my critics there are not a few to whom I feel deeply indebted for the careful attention which they have given to the exposition thus hampered ; and further weakened, I am afraid, by my forgetfulness of a maxim touching lectures of a popular character, which has descended to me from that prince of lecturers, Mr. Faraday. He was once asked by a beginner, called upon to address a highly select and cultivated audience, what he might suppose his hearers to know already. Whereupon the past master of the art of exposition emphatically replied "Nothing !"

To my shame as a retired veteran, who has all his life profited by this great precept of lecturing strategy, I forgot all about it just when it would have been most useful. I was fatuous enough to imagine that a number of propositions, which I thought established, and which, in fact, I had advanced without challenge on former occasions, needed no repetition.

I have endeavoured to repair my error by prefacing the lecture with some matter—chiefly elementary or recapitulatory—to which I have given the title of “Prolegomena.” I wish I could have hit upon a heading of less pedantic aspect which would have served my purpose; and if it be urged that the new building looks over large for the edifice to which it is added, I can only plead the precedent of the ancient architects, who always made the adytum the smallest part of the temple.

If I had attempted to reply in full to the criticisms to which I have referred, I know not what extent of ground would have been covered by my *pronaos*. All I have endeavoured to do, at present, is to remove that which seems to have proved a stumbling-block to many—namely, the apparent paradox that ethical nature, while born of cosmic nature, is necessarily at enmity with its parent. Unless the arguments set forth in the Prolegomena, in the simplest language at my command, have some flaw which I am unable to discern, this seeming paradox is a truth, as great as it is plain,

the recognition of which is fundamental for the ethical philosopher.

We cannot do without our inheritance from the forefathers who were the puppets of the cosmic process; the society which renounces it must be destroyed from without. Still less can we do with too much of it; the society in which it dominates must be destroyed from within.

The motive of the drama of human life is the necessity, laid upon every man who comes into the world, of discovering the mean between self-assertion and self-restraint suited to his character and his circumstances. And the eternally tragic aspect of the drama lies in this: that the problem set before us is one the elements of which can be but imperfectly known, and of which even an approximately right solution rarely presents itself, until that stern critic, aged experience, has been furnished with ample justification for venting his sarcastic humour upon the irreparable blunders we have already made.

HODESLEA, EASTBOURNE,
July 1894.

EVOLUTION AND ETHICS

PROLEGOMENA

[1894]

I

It may be safely assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Cæsar set foot in southern Britain, the whole country-side visible from the windows of the room in which I write, was in what is called "the state of nature." Except, it may be, by raising a few sepulchral mounds, such as those which still, here and there, break the flowing contours of the downs, man's hands had made no mark upon it; and the thin veil of vegetation which overspread the broad-backed heights and the shelving sides of the coombs was unaffected by his industry. The native grasses and weeds, the scattered patches of gorse, contended with one another for the possession of the scanty surface soil; they fought against the droughts of summer, the frosts of winter, and the furious gales which swept, with unbroken force, now from the Atlantic, and now from the North Sea, at all times of the year; they filled up, as they best might, the gaps made in their ranks by all sorts of underground and overground animal ravagers. One year with another, an average population, the floating balance of the unceasing struggle for existence among the indigenous plants, maintained itself. It is as little to be doubted, that an essentially similar state of nature prevailed, in this region, for many thousand years before the coming of Cæsar; and there is no assignable reason for denying that it might continue to exist through an equally prolonged futurity, except for the intervention of man.

Reckoned by our customary standards of duration, the native vegetation, like

the "everlasting hills" which it clothes, seems a type of permanence. The little *Amarella Gentians*, which abound in some places to-day, are the descendants of those that were trodden underfoot by the prehistoric savages who have left their flint tools about, here and there; and they followed ancestors which, in the climate of the glacial epoch, probably flourished better than they do now. Compared with the long past of this humble plant, all the history of civilised men is but an episode.

Yet nothing is more certain than that, measured by the liberal scale of time-keeping of the universe, this present state of nature, however it may seem to have gone and to go on for ever, is but a fleeting phase of her infinite variety; merely the last of the series of changes which the earth's surface has undergone in the course of the millions of years of its existence. Turn back a square foot of the thin turf, and the solid foundation of the land, exposed in cliffs of chalk five hundred feet high on the adjacent shore, yields full assurance of a time when the sea covered the site of the "everlasting hills"; and when the vegetation of what land lay nearest, was as different from the present Flora of the Sussex downs, as that of Central Africa now is.¹ No less certain is it that, between the time during which the chalk was formed and that at which the original turf came into existence, thousands of centuries elapsed, in the course of which, the state of nature of the ages during which the chalk was deposited, passed into that which now is, by changes so slow that, in the coming and

¹ See "On a piece of Chalk" in volume viii. of the Collected Essays (p. 1).

going of the generations of men, had such witnessed them, the contemporary conditions would have seemed to be unchanging and unchangeable.

But it is also certain that, before the deposition of the chalk, a vastly longer period had elapsed, throughout which it is easy to follow the traces of the same process of ceaseless modification and of the internecine struggle for existence of living things; and that even when we can get no further back, it is not because there is any reason to think we have reached the beginning, but because the trail of the most ancient life remains hidden, or has become obliterated.

Thus that state of nature of the world of plants, which we began by considering, is far from possessing the attribute of permanence. Rather its very essence is impermanence. It may have lasted twenty or thirty thousand years, it may last for twenty or thirty thousand years more, without obvious change; but, as surely as it has followed upon a very different state, so it will be followed by an equally different condition. That which endures is not one or another association of living forms, but the process of which the cosmos is the product, and of which these are among the transitory expressions. And in the living world, one of the most characteristic features of this cosmic process is the struggle for existence, the competition of each with all, the result of which is the selection, that is to say, the survival of those forms which, on the whole, are best adapted to the conditions which at any period obtain; and which are, therefore, in that respect, and only in that respect, the fittest.¹ The acme

¹ That every theory of evolution must be consistent not merely with progressive development, but with indefinite persistence in the same condition and with retrogressive modification, is a point which I have insisted upon repeatedly from the year 1862 till now. See *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 461—89; vol. iii. p. 33; vol. viii. p. 304. In the address on "Geological Contemporaneity and Persistent Types" (1862), the paleontological proofs of this proposition were, I believe, first set forth.

reached by the cosmic process in the vegetation of the downs is seen in the turf, with its weeds and gorse. Under the conditions, they have come out of the struggle victorious; and, by surviving, have proved that they are the fittest to survive.

That the state of nature, at any time, is a temporary phase of a process of incessant change, which has been going on for innumerable ages, appears to me to be a proposition as well established as any in modern history. Paleontology assures us, in addition, that the ancient philosophers who, with less reason, held the same doctrine, erred in supposing that the phases formed a cycle, exactly repeating the past, exactly foreshadowing the future, in their rotations. On the contrary, it furnishes us with conclusive reasons for thinking that, if every link in the ancestry of these humble indigenous plants had been preserved and were accessible to us, the whole would present a converging series of forms of gradually diminishing complexity, until, at some period in the history of the earth, far more remote than any of which organic remains have yet been discovered, they would merge in those low groups among which the boundaries between animal and vegetable life become effaced.¹

The word "evolution," now generally applied to the cosmic process, has had a singular history, and is used in various senses.² Taken in its popular significance it means progressive development, that is, gradual change from a condition of relative uniformity to one of relative complexity; but its connotation has been widened to include the phenomena of retrogressive metamorphosis, that is, of progress from a condition of relative complexity to one of relative uniformity.

As a natural process, of the same character as the development of a tree from its seed, or of a fowl from its egg,

¹ "On the Border Territory between the Animal and the Vegetable Kingdoms," *Essays*, vol. viii. p. 162.

² See "Evolution in Biology," *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 187.

evolution excludes creation and all other kinds of supernatural intervention. As the expression of a fixed order, every stage of which is the effect of causes operating according to definite rules, the conception of evolution no less excludes that of chance. It is very desirable to remember that evolution is not an explanation of the cosmic process, but merely a generalised statement of the method and results of that process. And, further, that, if there is proof that the cosmic process was set going by any agent, then that agent will be the creator of it and of all its products, although supernatural intervention may remain strictly excluded from its further course.

So far as that limited revelation of the nature of things, which we call scientific knowledge, has yet gone, it tends, with constantly increasing emphasis, to the belief that, not merely the world of plants, but that of animals; not merely living things, but the whole fabric of the earth; not merely our planet, but the whole solar system; not merely our star and its satellites, but the millions of similar bodies which bear witness to the order which pervades boundless space, and has endured through boundless time; are all working out their predestined courses of evolution.

With none of these have I anything to do, at present, except with that exhibited by the forms of life which tenant the earth. All plants and animals exhibit the tendency to vary, the causes of which have yet to be ascertained; it is the tendency of the conditions of life, at any given time, while favouring the existence of the variations best adapted to them, to oppose that of the rest and thus to exercise selection; and all living things tend to multiply without limit, while the means of support are limited; the obvious cause of which is the production of offspring more numerous than their progenitors, but with equal expectation of life in the actuarial sense. Without the first tendency there could be no evolution. Without the second, there would be no good reason why one variation

should disappear and another take its place; that is to say, there would be no selection. Without the third, the struggle for existence, the agent of the selective process in the state of nature, would vanish.¹

Granting the existence of these tendencies, all the known facts of the history of plants and of animals may be brought into rational correlation. And this is more than can be said for any other hypothesis that I know of. Such hypotheses, for example, as that of the existence of a primitive, orderless chaos; of a passive and sluggish eternal matter moulded, with but partial success, by archetypal ideas; of a brand-new world-stuff suddenly created and swiftly shaped by a supernatural power; receive no encouragement, but the contrary, from our present knowledge. That our earth may once have formed part of a nebulous cosmic magma is certainly possible; indeed seems highly probable; but there is no reason to doubt that order reigned there, as completely as amidst what we regard as the most finished works of nature or of man.² The faith which is born of knowledge, finds its object in an eternal order, bringing forth ceaseless change, through endless time, in endless space; the manifestations of the cosmic energy alternating between phases of potentiality and phases of explication. It may be that, as Kant suggests,³ every cosmic magma predestined to evolve into a new world, has been the no less predestined end of a vanished predecessor.

II

Three or four years have elapsed since the state of nature, to which I have referred, was brought to an end, so far as a small patch of the soil is concerned, by the intervention of man. The patch was cut off from the rest by a wall;

¹ *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. *passim*.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 138; vol. v. pp. 71—73.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. viii. p. 321.

within the area thus protected, the native vegetation was, as far as possible, extirpated; while a colony of strange plants was imported and set down in its place. In short, it was made into a garden. At the present time, this artificially treated area presents an aspect extraordinarily different from that of so much of the land as remains in the state of nature, outside the wall. Trees, shrubs, and herbs, many of them appertaining to the state of nature of remote parts of the globe, abound and flourish. Moreover, considerable quantities of vegetables, fruits, and flowers are produced, of kinds which neither now exist, nor have ever existed, except under conditions such as obtain in the garden; and which, therefore, are as much works of the art of man as the frames and glass-houses in which some of them are raised. That the "state of Art," thus created in the state of nature by man, is sustained by and dependent on him, would at once become apparent, if the watchful supervision of the gardener were withdrawn, and the antagonistic influences of the general cosmic process were no longer sedulously warded off or counteracted. The walls and gates would decay; quadrupedal and bipedal intruders would devour and tread down the useful and beautiful plants; birds, insects, blight, and mildew would work their will; the seeds of the native plants, carried by winds or other agencies, would immigrate, and in virtue of their long-earned special adaptation to the local conditions, these despised native weeds would soon choke their choice exotic rivals. A century or two hence, little beyond the foundations of the wall and of the houses and frames would be left, in evidence of the victory of the cosmic powers at work in the state of nature, over the temporary obstacles to their supremacy, set up by the art of the horticulturist.

It will be admitted that the garden is as much a work of art,¹ or artifice, as

anything that can be mentioned. The energy localised in certain human bodies, directed by similarly localised intellects, has produced a collocation of other material bodies which could not be brought about in the state of nature. The same proposition is true of all the works of man's hands, from a flint implement to a cathedral or a chronometer; and it is because it is true, that we call these things artificial, term them works of art, or artifice, by way of distinguishing them from the products of the cosmic process, working outside man, which we call natural, or works of nature. The distinction thus drawn between the works of nature and those of man, is universally recognised; and it is, as I conceive, both useful and justifiable.

III

No doubt, it may be properly urged that the operation of human energy and intelligence, which has brought into existence and maintains the garden, by what I have called "the horticultural process," is, strictly speaking, part and parcel of the cosmic process. And no one could more readily agree to that proposition than I. In fact, I do not know that any one has taken more pains than I have, during the last thirty years, to insist upon the doctrine, so much reviled in the early part of that period, that man, physical, intellectual, and moral, is as much a part of nature, as purely a product of the cosmic process, as the humblest weed.¹

But if, following up this admission, it is urged that, such being the case, the cosmic process cannot be in antagonism with that horticultural process which is part of itself—I can only reply, that if the conclusion that the two are antagonistic is logically absurd, I am sorry for logic, because, as we have seen, the in its wide embrace cooks and ballet girls, no less than painters and sculptors.

¹ See "Man's Place in Nature," *Collected Essays*, vol. vii., and "On the Struggle for Existence in Human Society" (1888), above.

¹ The sense of the term "Art" is becoming narrowed; "work of Art" to most people means a picture, a statue, or a piece of *bijouterie*; by way of compensation "artist" has included

fact is so. The garden is in the same position as every other work of man's art; it is a result of the cosmic process working through and by human energy and intelligence; and, as is the case with every other artificial thing set up in the state of nature, the influences of the latter are constantly tending to break it down and destroy it. No doubt, the Forth bridge and an ironclad in the offing, are, in ultimate resort, products of the cosmic process; as much so as the river which flows under the one, or the sea-water on which the other floats. Nevertheless, every breeze strains the bridge a little, every tide does something to weaken its foundations; every change of temperature alters the adjustment of its parts, produces friction and consequent wear and tear. From time to time, the bridge must be repaired, just as the ironclad must go into dock; simply because nature is always tending to reclaim that which her child, man, has borrowed from her and has arranged in combinations which are not those favoured by the general cosmic process.

Thus, it is not only true that the cosmic energy, working through man upon a portion of the plant world, opposes the same energy as it works through the state of nature, but a similar antagonism is everywhere manifest between the artificial and the natural. Even in the state of nature itself, what is the struggle for existence but the antagonism of the results of the cosmic process in the region of life, one to another?¹

IV

Not only is the state of nature hostile to the state of art of the garden; but the principle of the horticultural process, by which the latter is created and main-

tained, is antithetic to that of the cosmic process. The characteristic feature of the latter is the intense and unceasing competition of the struggle for existence. The characteristic of the former is the elimination of that struggle, by the removal of the conditions which give rise to it. The tendency of the cosmic process is to bring about the adjustment of the forms of plant life to the current conditions; the tendency of the horticultural process is the adjustment of the conditions to the needs of the forms of plant life which the gardener desires to raise.

The cosmic process uses unrestricted multiplication as the means whereby hundreds compete for the place and nourishment adequate for one; it employs frost and drought to cut off the weak and unfortunate; to survive, there is need not only of strength, but of flexibility and of good fortune.

The gardener, on the other hand, restricts multiplication; provides that each plant shall have sufficient space and nourishment; protects from frost and drought; and, in every other way, attempts to modify the conditions, in such a manner as to bring about the survival of those forms which most nearly approach the standard of the useful, or the beautiful, which he has in his mind.

If the fruits and the tubers, the foliage and the flowers thus obtained, reach, or sufficiently approach, that ideal, there is no reason why the *status quo* attained should not be indefinitely prolonged. So long as the state of nature remains approximately the same, so long will the energy and intelligence which created the garden suffice to maintain it. However, the limits within which this mastery of man over nature can be maintained are narrow. If the conditions of the cretaceous epoch returned, I fear the most skilful of gardeners would have to give up the cultivation of apples and gooseberries; while, if those of the glacial period once again obtained, open asparagus beds would be superfluous, and the training of fruit trees against

¹ Or to put the case still more simply. When a man lays hold of the two ends of a piece of string and pulls them, with intent to break it, the right arm is certainly exerted in antagonism to the left arm; yet both arms derive their energy from the same original source.

the most favourable of south walls, a waste of time and trouble.

But it is extremely important to note that, the state of nature remaining the same, if the produce does not satisfy the gardener, it may be made to approach his ideal more closely. Although the struggle for existence may be at end, the possibility of progress remains. In discussions on these topics, it is often strangely forgotten that the essential conditions of the modification, or evolution, of living things are variation and hereditary transmission. Selection is the means by which certain variations are favoured and their progeny preserved. But the struggle for existence is only one of the means by which selection may be effected. The endless varieties of cultivated flowers, fruits, roots, tubers, and bulbs are not products of selection by means of the struggle for existence, but of direct selection, in view of an ideal of utility or beauty. Amidst a multitude of plants, occupying the same station and subjected to the same conditions, in the garden, varieties arise. The varieties tending in a given direction are preserved, and the rest are destroyed. And the same process takes place among the varieties until, for example, the wild kale becomes a cabbage, or the wild *Viola tricolor* a prize pansy.

V

The process of colonisation presents analogies to the formation of a garden which are highly instructive. Suppose a shipload of English colonists sent to form a settlement, in such a country as Tasmania was in the middle of the last century. On landing, they find themselves in the midst of a state of nature, widely different from that left behind them in everything but the most general physical conditions. The common plants, the common birds and quadrupeds, are as totally distinct as the men from anything to be seen on the side

of the globe from which they come. The colonists proceed to put an end to this state of things over as large an area as they desire to occupy. They clear away the native vegetation, extirpate or drive out the animal population, so far as may be necessary, and take measures to defend themselves from the re-immigration of either. In their place they introduce English grain and fruit trees; English dogs, sheep, cattle, horses; and English men; in fact, they set up a new Flora and Fauna and a new variety of mankind, within the old state of nature. Their farms and pastures represent a garden on a great scale, and themselves the gardeners who have to keep it up, in watchful antagonism to the old *régime*. Considered as a whole, the colony is a composite unit introduced into the old state of nature; and, thenceforward, a competitor in the struggle for existence, to conquer or be vanquished.

Under the conditions supposed, there is no doubt of the result, if the work of the colonists be carried out energetically and with intelligent combination of all their forces. On the other hand, if they are slothful, stupid, and careless; or if they waste their energies in contests with one another, the chances are that the old state of nature will have the best of it. The native savage will destroy the immigrant civilised man; of the English animals and plants some will be extirpated by their indigenous rivals, others will pass into the feral state and themselves become components of the state of nature. In a few decades, all other traces of the settlement will have vanished.

VI

Let us now imagine that some administrative authority, as far superior in power and intelligence to men, as men are to their cattle, is set over the colony, charged to deal with its human elements in such a manner as to assure the victory

of the settlement over the antagonistic influences of the state of nature in which it is set down. He would proceed in the same fashion as that in which the gardener dealt with his garden. In the first place, he would, as far as possible, put a stop to the influence of external competition by thoroughly extirpating and excluding the native rivals whether men, beasts, or plants. And our administrator would select his human agents, with a view to his ideal of a successful colony, just as the gardener selects his plants with a view to his ideal of useful or beautiful products.

In the second place, in order that no struggle for the means of existence between these human agents should weaken the efficiency of the corporate whole in the battle with the state of nature, he would make arrangements by which each would be provided with those means; and would be relieved from the fear of being deprived of them by his stronger or more cunning fellows. Laws, sanctioned by the combined force of the colony, would restrain the self-assertion of each man within the limits required for the maintenance of peace. In other words, the cosmic struggle for existence, as between man and man, would be rigorously suppressed; and selection, by its means, would be as completely excluded as it is from the garden.

At the same time, the obstacles to the full development of the capacities of the colonists by other conditions of the state of nature than those already mentioned, would be removed by the creation of artificial conditions of existence of a more favourable character. Protection against extremes of heat and cold would be afforded by houses and clothing; drainage and irrigation works would antagonise the effects of excessive rain and excessive drought; roads, bridges, canals, carriages, and ships would overcome the natural obstacles to locomotion and transport; mechanical engines would supplement the natural strength of men and of their

draught animals; hygienic precautions would check, or remove, the natural causes of disease. With every step of this progress in civilisation, the colonists would become more and more independent of the state of nature; more and more, their lives would be conditioned by a state of art. In order to attain his ends, the administrator would have to avail himself of the courage, industry, and co-operative intelligence of the settlers; and it is plain that the interest of the community would be best served by increasing the proportion of persons who possess such qualities, and diminishing that of persons devoid of them. In other words, by selection directed towards an ideal.

Thus the administrator might look to the establishment of an earthly paradise, a true garden of Eden, in which all things should work together towards the well-being of the gardeners: within which the cosmic process, the coarse struggle for existence of the state of nature should be abolished; in which that state should be replaced by a state of art; where every plant and every lower animal should be adapted to human wants, and would perish if human supervision and protection were withdrawn; where men themselves should have been selected, with a view to their efficiency as organs for the performance of the functions of a perfected society. And this ideal polity would have been brought about, not by gradually adjusting the men to the conditions around them, but by creating artificial conditions for them; not by allowing the free play of the struggle for existence, but by excluding that struggle; and by substituting selection directed towards the administrator's ideal for the selection it exercises.

VII

But the Eden would have its serpent, and a very subtle beast too. Man shares with the rest of the living world the

mighty instinct of reproduction and its consequence, the tendency to multiply with great rapidity. The better the measures of the administrator achieved their object, the more completely the destructive agencies of the state of nature were defeated, the less would that multiplication be checked.

On the other hand, within the colony, the enforcement of peace, which deprives every man of the power to take away the means of existence from another, simply because he is the stronger, would have put an end to the struggle for existence between the colonists, and the competition for the commodities of existence, which would alone remain, is no check upon population.

Thus, as soon as the colonists began to multiply, the administrator would have to face the tendency to the re-introduction of the cosmic struggle into his artificial fabric, in consequence of the competition, not merely for the commodities, but for the means of existence. When the colony reached the limit of possible expansion, the surplus population must be disposed of somehow; or the fierce struggle for existence must recommence and destroy that peace, which is the fundamental condition of the maintenance of the state of art against the state of nature.

Supposing the administrator to be guided by purely scientific considerations, he would, like the gardener, meet this most serious difficulty by systematic extirpation, or exclusion, of the superfluous. The hopelessly diseased, the infirm aged, the weak or deformed in body or in mind, the excess of infants born, would be put away, as the gardener pulls up defective and superfluous plants, or the breeder destroys undesirable cattle. Only the strong and the healthy, carefully matched, with a view to the progeny best adapted to the purposes of the administrator, would be permitted to perpetuate their kind.

VIII

Of the more thoroughgoing of the multitudinous attempts to apply the principles of cosmic evolution, or what are supposed to be such, to social and political problems, which have appeared of late years, a considerable proportion appear to me to be based upon the notion that human society is competent to furnish, from its own resources, an administrator of the kind I have imagined. The pigeons, in short, are to be their own Sir John Sebright.¹ A despotic government, whether individual or collective, is to be endowed with the preternatural intelligence, and with what, I am afraid, many will consider the preternatural ruthlessness, required for the purpose of carrying out the principle of improvement by selection, with the somewhat drastic thoroughness upon which the success of the method depends. Experience certainly does not justify us in limiting the ruthlessness of individual "saviours of society"; and, on the well-known grounds of the aphorism which denies both body and soul to corporations, it seems probable (indeed the belief is not without support in history) that a collective despotism, a mob got to believe in its own divine right by demagogic missionaries, would be capable of more thorough work in this direction than any single tyrant, puffed up with the same illusion, has ever achieved. But intelligence is another affair. The fact that "saviours of society" take to that trade is evidence enough that they have none to spare. And such as they possess is generally sold to the capitalists of physical force on whose resources they depend. However, I doubt whether even the keenest judge of character, if he had before him a hundred boys and girls under fourteen, could pick out, with the least chance of success, those who should be kept, as

¹ Not that the conception of such a society is necessarily based upon the idea of evolution. The Platonic state testifies to the contrary.

certain to be serviceable members of the polity, and those who should be chloroformed, as equally sure to be stupid, idle, or vicious. The "points" of a good or of a bad citizen are really far harder to discern than those of a puppy or a short-horn calf; many do not show themselves before the practical difficulties of life stimulate manhood to full exertion. And by that time the mischief is done. The evil stock, if it be one, has had time to multiply, and selection is nullified.

IX

I have other reasons for fearing that this logical ideal of evolutionary regimentation—this pigeon-fanciers' polity—is unattainable. In the absence of any such a severely scientific administrator as we have been dreaming of, human society is kept together by bonds of such a singular character, that the attempt to perfect society after his fashion would run serious risk of loosening them.

Social organisation is not peculiar to men. Other societies, such as those constituted by bees and ants, have also arisen out of the advantage of co-operation in the struggle for existence; and their resemblances to, and their differences from, human society are alike instructive. The society formed by the hive bee fulfils the ideal of the communistic aphorism "to each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity." Within it, the struggle for existence is strictly limited. Queen, drones, and workers have each their allotted sufficiency of food; each performs the function assigned to it in the economy of the hive, and all contribute to the success of the whole co-operative society in its competition with rival collectors of nectar and pollen and with other enemies, in the state of nature without. In the same sense as the garden, or the colony, is a work of human art, the bee polity is a work of

apiarian art, brought about by the cosmic process, working through the organisation of the hymenopterous type.

Now this society is the direct product of an organic necessity impelling every member of it to a course of action which tends to the good of the whole. Each bee has its duty and none has any rights. Whether bees are susceptible of feeling and capable of thought is a question which cannot be dogmatically answered. As a pious opinion, I am disposed to deny them more than the merest rudiments of consciousness.¹ But it is curious to reflect that a thoughtful drone (workers and queens would have no leisure for speculation) with a turn for ethical philosophy, must needs profess himself an intuitive moralist of the purest water. He would point out, with perfect justice, that the devotion of the workers to a life of ceaseless toil for a mere subsistence wage, cannot be accounted for either by enlightened selfishness, or by any other sort of utilitarian motives; since these bees begin to work, without experience or reflection, as they emerge from the cell in which they are hatched. Plainly, an eternal and immutable principle, innate in each bee, can alone account for the phenomena. On the other hand, the biologist, who traces out all the extant stages of gradation between solitary and hive bees, as clearly sees in the latter, simply the perfection of an automatic mechanism, hammered out by the blows of the struggle for existence upon the progeny of the former, during long ages of constant variation.

X

I see no reason to doubt that, at its origin, human society was as much a product of organic necessity as that of the bees.² The human family, to begin

¹ *Collected Essays*, vol. i., "Animal Automatism"; vol. v., "Prologue," pp. 45 *et seq.*

² *Collected Essays*, vol. v., "Prologue," pp. 50-54.

with, rested upon exactly the same conditions as those which gave rise to similar associations among animals lower in the scale. Further, it is easy to see that every increase in the duration of the family ties, with the resulting co-operation of a larger and larger number of descendants for protection and defence, would give the families in which such modification took place a distinct advantage over the others. And, as in the hive, the progressive limitation of the struggle for existence between the members of the family would involve increasing efficiency as regards outside competition.

But there is this vast and fundamental difference between bee society and human society. In the former, the members of the society are each organically predestined to the performance of one particular class of functions only. If they were endowed with desires, each could desire to perform none but those offices for which its organisation specially fits it; and which, in view of the good of the whole, it is proper it should do. So long as a new queen does not make her appearance, rivalries and competition are absent from the bee polity.

Among mankind, on the contrary, there is no such predestination to a sharply defined place in the social organism. However much men may differ in the quality of their intellects, the intensity of their passions, and the delicacy of their sensations, it cannot be said that one is fitted by his organisation to be an agricultural labourer and nothing else, and another to be a landowner and nothing else. Moreover, with all their enormous differences in natural endowment, men agree in one thing, and that is their innate desire to enjoy the pleasures and to escape the pains of life; and, in short, to do nothing but that which it pleases them to do, without the least reference to the welfare of the society into which they are born. That is their inheritance (the reality at the bottom of the doctrine of original sin) from the long series of ancestors, human

and semi-human and brutal, in whom the strength of this innate tendency to self-assertion was the condition of victory in the struggle for existence. That is the reason of the *aviditas vitæ*¹—the insatiable hunger for enjoyment—of all mankind, which is one of the essential conditions of success in the war with the state of nature outside; and yet the sure agent of the destruction of society if allowed free play within.

The check upon this free play of self-assertion, or natural liberty, which is the necessary condition for the origin of human society, is the product of organic necessities of a different kind from those upon which the constitution of the hive depends. One of these is the mutual affection of parent and offspring, intensified by the long infancy of the human species. But the most important is the tendency, so strongly developed in man, to reproduce in himself actions and feelings similar to, or correlated with, those of other men. Man is the most consummate of all mimics in the animal world; none but himself can draw or model; none comes near him in the scope, variety, and exactness of vocal imitation; none is such a master of gesture; while he seems to be impelled thus to imitate for the pure pleasure of it. And there is no such another emotional chameleon. By a purely reflex operation of the mind, we take the hue of passion of those who are about us, or, it may be, the complementary colour. It is not by any conscious "putting one's self in the place" of a joyful or a suffering person that the state of mind we call sympathy usually arises;² indeed, it is often contrary to one's sense of right, and in spite of one's will, that

¹ See below. Romanes Lecture, note 7.

² Adam Smith makes the pithy observation that the man who sympathises with a woman in childbed, cannot be said to put himself in her place. ("The Theory of the Moral Sentiments," Part vii. sec. iii. chap. i.) Perhaps there is more humour than force in the example; and, in spite of this and other observations of the same tenor, I think that the one defect of the remarkable work in which it occurs is that it lays too much stress on conscious substitution, too little on purely reflex sympathy.

"fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," or the reverse. However complete may be the indifference to public opinion, in a cool, intellectual view, of the traditional sage, it has not yet been my fortune to meet with any actual sage who took its hostile manifestations with entire equanimity. Indeed, I doubt if the philosopher lives, or ever has lived, who could know himself to be heartily despised by a street boy without some irritation. And, though one cannot justify Haman for wishing to hang Mordecai on such a very high gibbet, yet, really, the consciousness of the Vizier of Ahasuerus, as he went in and out of the gate, that this obscure Jew had no respect for him, must have been very annoying.¹

It is needful only to look around us, to see that the greatest restrainer of the anti-social tendencies of men is fear, not of the law, but of the opinion of their fellows. The conventions of honour bind men who break legal, moral, and religious bonds; and, while people endure the extremity of physical pain rather than part with life, shame drives the weakest to suicide.

Every forward step of social progress brings men into closer relations with their fellows, and increases the importance of the pleasures and pains derived from sympathy. We judge the acts of others by our own sympathies, and we judge our own acts by the sympathies of others, every day and all day long, from childhood upwards, until associations, as indissoluble as those of language, are formed between certain acts and the feelings of approbation or disapprobation. It becomes impossible to imagine some acts without disapprobation, or others without approbation of the actor, whether

he be one's self, or any one else. We come to think in the acquired dialect of morals. An artificial personality, the "man within," as Adam Smith¹ calls conscience, is built up beside the natural personality. He is the watchman society, charged to restrain the anti-social tendencies of the natural man within limits required by social welfare.

XI

I have termed this evolution of feelings out of which the primitive bonds of human society are so largely formed into the organised and personified sympathy we call conscience, the ethical process.² So far as it tends to make human society more efficient in its struggle for existence with the state of nature, or with other societies, it works in harmonious contrast with the cosmic process. But it is none the less true that, since law and morals are restraints upon the struggle for existence between men in society, the ethical process is in opposition to the principle of the cosmic process, and tends to the suppression of the qualities best fitted for success in that struggle.³

It is further to be observed that, just as the self-assertion, necessary to the maintenance of society against the state of nature, will destroy that society if it is allowed free operation within; so the self-restraint, the essence of the ethical process, which is no less an essential condition of the existence of every polity, may, by excess, become ruinous to it.

Moralists of all ages and of all faiths, attending only to the relations of men

¹ "Theory of the Moral Sentiments," Part iii. chap. 3. *On the influence and authority of conscience.*

² Worked out, in its essential features, chiefly by Hartley and Adam Smith, long before the modern doctrine of evolution was thought of. See *Note* below, p. 37.

³ See the essay "On the Struggle for Existence in Human Society" above; and *Collected Essays*, vol. i. p. 276, for Kant's recognition of these facts.

¹ Esther v. 9-13. "... but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. . . . And Haman told them of the glory of his riches. . . . and all the things wherein the king had promoted him. . . . Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." What a shrewd exposure of human weakness it is!

towards one another in an ideal society, have agreed upon the "golden rule," "Do as you would be done by." In other words, let sympathy be your guide; put yourself in the place of the man towards whom your action is directed; and do to him what you would like to have done to yourself under the circumstances. However much one may admire the generosity of such a rule of conduct; however confident one may be that average men may be thoroughly depended upon not to carry it out to its logical consequences; it is nevertheless desirable to recognise the fact that these consequences are incompatible with the existence of a civil state, under the circumstances of this world which we have obtained, or, so far as one can see, are likely to come to pass.

For I imagine there can be no doubt that the great desire of every wrongdoer is to escape from the painful consequences of his actions. If I put myself in the place of the man who has robbed me, I find that I am possessed by an insatiable desire not to be fined or imprisoned; if in that of the man who has smitten me on one cheek, I contemplate with satisfaction the absence of any worse result than the turning of the other cheek for like treatment. Strictly observed, the "golden rule" involves the negation of law by the refusal to put it in motion against law-breakers; and, as regards the external relations of a polity, it is the refusal to continue the struggle for existence. It can be obeyed, even partially, only under the protection of a society which repudiates it. Without such shelter, the followers of the "golden rule" may indulge in hopes of heaven, but they must reckon with the certainty that other people will be masters of the earth.

What would become of the garden if the gardener treated all the weeds and slugs and birds and trespassers as he would like to be treated, if he were in their place?

XII

Under the preceding heads, I have endeavoured to represent in broad, but I hope faithful, outlines, the essential features of the state of nature and of that cosmic process of which it is the outcome, so far as was needful for my argument; I have contrasted with the state of nature the state of art, produced by human intelligence and energy, as it is exemplified by a garden; and I have shown that the state of art, here and elsewhere, can be maintained only by the constant counteraction of the hostile influences of the state of nature. Further, I have pointed out that the "horticultural process" which thus sets itself against the "cosmic process" is opposed to the latter in principle, in so far as it tends to arrest the struggle for existence, by restraining the multiplication which is one of the chief causes of that struggle, and by creating artificial conditions of life, better adapted to the cultivated plants than are the conditions of the state of nature. And I have dwelt upon the fact that, though the progressive modification, which is the consequence of the struggle for existence in the state of nature, is at an end, such modification may still be effected by that selection, in view of an ideal of usefulness, or of pleasantness, to man, of which the state of nature knows nothing.

I have proceeded to show that a colony, set down in the country in a state of nature, presents close analogies with a garden; and I have indicated the course of action which an administrator, able and willing to carry out horticultural principles, would adopt, in order to secure the success of such a newly formed polity, supposing it to be capable of indefinite expansion. In the contrary case, I have shown that difficulties must arise; that the unlimited increase of the population over a limited area must, sooner or later, reintroduce into the colony that struggle for the

means of existence between the colonists, which it was the primary object of the administrator to exclude, insomuch as it is fatal to the mutual peace which is the prime condition of the union of men in society.

I have briefly described the nature of the only radical cure, known to me, for the disease which would thus threaten the existence of the colony; and, however regretfully, I have been obliged to admit that this rigorously scientific method of applying the principles of evolution to human society hardly comes within the region of practical politics; not for want of will on the part of a great many people; but because, for one reason, there is no hope that mere human beings will ever possess enough intelligence to select the fittest. And I have adduced other grounds for arriving at the same conclusion.

I have pointed out that human society took its rise in the organic necessities expressed by imitation and by the sympathetic emotions; and that, in the struggle for existence with the state of nature and with other societies, as part of it, those in which men were thus led to close co-operation had a great advantage.¹ But, since each man retained more or less of the faculties common to all the rest, and especially a full share of the desire for unlimited self-gratification, the struggle for existence within society could only be gradually eliminated. So long as any of it remained, society continued to be an imperfect instrument of the struggle for existence and, consequently, was improvable by the selective influence of that struggle. Other things being alike, the tribe of savages in which order was best maintained; in which there was most security within the tribe and the most loyal mutual support outside it, would be the survivors.

I have termed this gradual strengthening of the social bond, which though it arrests the struggle for existence inside society, up to a certain point improves the chances of society, as a corporate

whole, in the cosmic struggle—the ethical process. I have endeavoured to show that, when the ethical process has advanced so far as to secure every member of the society in the possession of the means of existence, the struggle for existence, as between man and man, within that society is, *ipso facto*, at an end. And, as it is undeniable that the most highly civilised societies have substantially reached this position, it follows that, so far as they are concerned, the struggle for existence can play no important part within them.¹ In other words, the kind of evolution which is brought about in the state of nature cannot take place.

I have further shown cause for the belief that direct selection, after the fashion of the horticulturist and the breeder, neither has played, nor can play, any important part in the evolution of society; apart from other reasons, because I do not see how such selection could be practised without a serious weakening, it may be the destruction, of the bonds which hold society together. It strikes me that men who are accustomed to contemplate the active or passive extirpation of the weak, the unfortunate, and the superfluous; who justify that conduct on the ground that it has the sanction of the cosmic process, and is the only way of ensuring the progress of the race; who, if they are consistent, must rank medicine among the black arts and count the physician a mischievous preserver of the unfit; on whose matrimonial undertakings the principles of the stud have the chief influence; whose whole lives, therefore, are an education in the noble art of suppressing natural affection and sympathy, are not likely to have any large stock of these commodities left. But, without them, there is no con-

¹ Whether the struggle for existence with the state of nature and with other societies, so far as they stand in the relation of the state of nature with it, exerts a selective influence upon modern society, and in what direction, are questions not easy to answer. The problem of the effect of military and industrial warfare upon those who wage it is very complicated.

¹ *Collected Essays*, vol. v., "Prologue," p. 52.

science, nor any restraint on the conduct of men, except the calculation of self-interest, the balancing of certain present gratifications against doubtful future pains; and experience tells us how much that is worth. Every day, we see firm believers in the hell of the theologians commit acts by which, as they believe when cool, they risk eternal punishment; while they hold back from those which are opposed to the sympathies of their associates.

XIII

That progressive modification of civilisation which passes by the name of the "evolution of society," is, in fact, a process of an essentially different character, both from that which brings about the evolution of species, in the state of nature, and from that which gives rise to the evolution of varieties, in the state of art.

There can be no doubt that vast changes have taken place in English civilisation since the reign of the Tudors. But I am not aware of a particle of evidence in favour of the conclusion that this evolutionary process has been accompanied by any modification of the physical, or the mental, characters of the men who have been the subjects of it. I have not met with any grounds for suspecting that the average Englishmen of to-day are sensibly different from those that Shakspeare knew and drew. We look into his magic mirror of the Elizabethan age, and, behold, nowise darkly, the presentment of ourselves.

During these three centuries, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Victoria, the struggle for existence between man and man has been so largely restrained among the great mass of the population (except for one or two short intervals of civil war), that it can have had little, or no, selective operation. As to anything comparable to direct selection,

it has been practised on so small a scale that it may also be neglected. The criminal law, in so far as by putting to death, or by subjecting to long periods of imprisonment, those who infringe its provisions, it prevents the propagation of hereditary criminal tendencies; and the poor-law, in so far as it separates married couples, whose destitution arises from hereditary defects of character, are doubtless selective agents operating in favour of the non-criminal and the more effective members of society. But the proportion of the population which they influence is very small; and, generally, the hereditary criminal and the hereditary pauper have propagated their kind before the law affects them. In a large proportion of cases, crime and pauperism have nothing to do with heredity; but are the consequence, partly, of circumstances and, partly, of the possession of qualities, which, under different conditions of life, might have excited esteem and even admiration. It was a shrewd man of the world who, in discussing sewage problems, remarked that dirt is riches in the wrong place; and that sound aphorism has moral applications. The benevolence and open-handed generosity which adorn a rich man, may make a pauper of a poor one; the energy and courage to which the successful soldier owes his rise, the cool and daring subtlety to which the great financier owes his fortune, may very easily, under unfavourable conditions, lead their possessors to the gallows, or to the hulks. Moreover, it is fairly probable that the children of a "failure" will receive from their other parent just that little modification of character which makes all the difference. I sometimes wonder whether people, who talk so freely about extirpating the unfit, ever dispassionately consider their own history. Surely, one must be very "fit," indeed, not to know of an occasion, or perhaps two, in one's life, when it would have been only too easy to qualify for a place among the "unfit."

In my belief the innate qualities,

physical, intellectual, and moral, of our nation have remained substantially the same for the last four or five centuries. If the struggle for existence has affected us to any serious extent (and I doubt it) it has been, indirectly, through our military and industrial wars with other nations.

XIV

What is often called the struggle for existence in society (I plead guilty to having used the term too loosely myself), is a contest, not for the means of existence, but for the means of enjoyment. Those who occupy the first places in this practical competitive examination are the rich and the influential; those who fail, more or less, occupy the lower places, down to the squalid obscurity of the pauper and the criminal. Upon the most liberal estimate, I suppose the former group will not amount to two per cent. of the population. I doubt if the latter exceeds another two per cent.; but let it be supposed, for the sake of argument, that it is as great as five per cent.¹

As it is only in the latter group that anything comparable to the struggle for existence in the state of nature can take place; as it is only among this twentieth of the whole people that numerous men, women, and children die of rapid or slow starvation, or of the diseases incidental to permanently bad conditions of life; and as there is nothing to prevent their multiplication before they are killed off, while, in spite of greater infant mortality, they increase faster than the rich; it seems clear that the struggle for existence in this class can have no appreciable selective influence upon the other 95 per cent. of the population.

What sort of a sheep breeder would he be who should content himself with picking out the worst fifty out of a thousand,

¹ Those who read the last Essay in this volume will not accuse me of wishing to attenuate the evil of the existence of this group, whether great or small.

leaving them on a barren common till the weakest starved, and then letting the survivors go back to mix with the rest? And the parallel is too favourable; since in a large number of cases, the actual poor and the convicted criminals are neither the weakest nor the worst.

In the struggle for the means of enjoyment, the qualities which ensure success are energy, industry, intellectual capacity, tenacity of purpose, and, at least as much sympathy as is necessary to make a man understand the feelings of his fellows. Were there none of those artificial arrangements by which fools and knaves are kept at the top of society instead of sinking to their natural place at the bottom,¹ the struggle for the means of enjoyment would ensure a constant circulation of the human units of the social compound, from the bottom to the top and from the top to the bottom. The survivors of the contest, those who continued to form the great bulk of the polity, would not be those "fittest" who got to the very top, but the great body of the moderately "fit," whose numbers and superior propagative power, enable them always to swamp the exceptionally endowed minority.

I think it must be obvious to every one, that, whether we consider the internal or the external interests of society, it is desirable they should be in the hands of those who are endowed with the largest share of energy, of industry, of intellectual capacity, of tenacity of purpose, while they are not devoid of sympathetic humanity; and, in so far as the struggle for the means of enjoyment tends to place such men in possession of wealth and influence, it is a process which tends to the good of society. But the process, as we have seen, has no real resemblance to that which adapts living beings to current conditions in the state of nature; nor any to the artificial selection of the horticulturist.

¹ I have elsewhere lamented the absence from society of a machinery for facilitating the descent of incapacity. "Administrative Nihilism," *Collected Essays*, vol. i. p. 54.

XV

To return, once more, to the parallel of horticulture. In the modern world, the gardening of men by themselves is practically restricted to the performance, not of selection, but of that other function of the gardener, the creation of conditions more favourable than those of the state of nature ; to the end of facilitating the free expansion of the innate faculties of the citizen, so far as it is consistent with the general good. And the business of the moral and political philosopher appears to me to be the ascertainment, by the same method of observation, experiment, and ratiocination, as is practised in other kinds of scientific work, of the course of conduct which will best conduce to that end.

But, supposing this course of conduct to be scientifically determined and carefully followed out, it cannot put an end to the struggle for existence in the state of nature ; and it will not so much as tend, in any way, to the adaptation of man to that state. Even should the whole human race be absorbed in one vast polity, within which "absolute political justice" reigns, the struggle for existence with the state of nature outside it, and the tendency to the return of the struggle within, in consequence of over-multiplication, will remain ; and, unless men's inheritance from the ancestors who fought a good fight in the state of nature, their dose of original sin, is rooted out by some method at present unrevealed, at any rate to disbelievers in supernaturalism, every child born into the world will still bring with him the instinct of unlimited self-assertion. He will have to learn the lesson of self-restraint and renunciation. But the practice of self-restraint and renunciation is not happi-

ness, though it may be something much better.

That man, as a 'political animal,' is susceptible of a vast amount of improvement, by education, by instruction, and by the application of his intelligence to the adaptation of the conditions of life to his higher needs, I entertain not the slightest doubt. But, so long as he remains liable to error, intellectual or moral ; so long as he is compelled to be perpetually on guard against the cosmic forces, whose ends are not his ends, without and within himself ; so long as he is haunted by inexpugnable memories and hopeless aspirations ; so long as the recognition of his intellectual limitations forces him to acknowledge his incapacity to penetrate the mystery of existence ; the prospect of attaining untroubled happiness, or of a state which can, even remotely, deserve the title of perfection, appears to me to be as misleading an illusion as ever was dangled before the eyes of poor humanity. And there have been many of them.

That which lies before the human race is a constant struggle to maintain and improve, in opposition to the State of Nature, the State of Art of an organised polity ; in which, and by which, man may develop a worthy civilisation, capable of maintaining and constantly improving itself, until the evolution of our globe shall have entered so far upon its downward course that the cosmic process resumes its sway ; and, once more, the State of Nature prevails over the surface of our planet.

Note (see p. 32).—It seems the fashion nowadays to ignore Hartley ; though, a century and a half ago, he not only laid the foundations but built up much of the superstructure of a true theory of the Evolution of the intellectual and moral faculties. He speaks of what I have termed the ethical process as "our Progress from Self-interest to Self-annihilation." *Observations on Man* (1749), vol. i. p. 281.

EVOLUTION AND ETHICS

[*The Romanes Lecture, 1893*]

Soleo enim et in aliena castra transire, non tanquam transfuga sed tanquam explorator. (L. ANNÆI SENECAE EPIST. II. 4.)

THERE is a delightful child's story, known by the title of "Jack and the Bean-stalk," with which my contemporaries who are present will be familiar. But so many of our grave and reverend juniors have been brought up on severer intellectual diet, and, perhaps, have become acquainted with fairyland only through primers of comparative mythology, that it may be needful to give an outline of the tale. It is a legend of a bean-plant, which grows and grows until it reaches the high heavens and there spreads out into a vast canopy of foliage. The hero, being moved to climb the stalk, discovers that the leafy expanse supports a world composed of the same elements as that below, but yet strangely new; and his adventures there, on which I may not dwell, must have completely changed his views of the nature of things; though the story, not having been composed by, or for, philosophers, has nothing to say about views.

My present enterprise has a certain analogy to that of the daring adventurer. I beg you to accompany me in an attempt to reach a world which, to many, is probably strange, by the help of a bean. It is, as you know, a simple, inert-looking thing. Yet, if planted under proper conditions, of which sufficient warmth is one of the most important, it manifests active powers of a very remarkable kind. A small green seedling emerges, rises to the surface of the soil, rapidly increases in size and, at the same time, undergoes a series of metamorphoses which do not excite our wonder as much as those which meet us in legendary history, merely because

they are to be seen every day and all day long.

By insensible steps, the plant builds itself up into a large and various fabric of root, stem, leaves, flowers, and fruit, every one moulded within and without in accordance with an extremely complex but, at the same time, minutely defined pattern. In each of these complicated structures, as in their smallest constituents, there is an immanent energy which, in harmony with that resident in all the others, incessantly works towards the maintenance of the whole and the efficient performance of the part which it has to play in the economy of nature. But no sooner has the edifice, reared with such exact elaboration, attained completeness, than it begins to crumble. By degrees, the plant withers and disappears from view, leaving behind more or fewer apparently inert and simple bodies, just like the bean from which it sprang; and, like it, endowed with the potentiality of giving rise to a similar cycle of manifestations.

Neither the poetic nor the scientific imagination is put to much strain in the search after analogies with this process of going forth and, as it were, returning to the starting-point. It may be likened to the ascent and descent of a slung stone, or the course of an arrow along its trajectory. Or we may say that the living energy takes first an upward and then a downward road. Or it may seem preferable to compare the expansion of the germ into the full-grown plant, to the unfolding of a fan, or to the rolling forth and widening of a stream; and thus to arrive at the conception of 'development' or 'evolution.' Here, as elsewhere, names are 'noise and smoke'; the important point is to

have a clear and adequate conception of the fact signified by a name. And, in this case, the fact is the Sisyphean process, in the course of which, the living and growing plant passes from the relative simplicity and latent potentiality of the seed to the full epiphany of a highly differentiated type, thence to fall back to simplicity and potentiality.

The value of a strong intellectual grasp of the nature of this process lies in the circumstance that what is true of the bean is true of living things in general. From very low forms up to the highest—in the animal no less than in the vegetable kingdom—the process of life presents the same appearance¹ of cyclical evolution. Nay, we have but to cast our eyes over the rest of the world and cyclical change presents itself on all sides. It meets us in the water that flows to the sea and returns to the springs; in the heavenly bodies that wax and wane, go and return to their places; in the inexorable sequence of the ages of man's life; in that successive rise, apogee, and fall of dynasties and of states which is the most prominent topic of civil history.

As no man fording a swift stream can dip his foot twice into the same water, so no man can, with exactness, affirm of anything in the sensible world that it is.² As he utters the words, nay, as he thinks them, the predicate ceases to be applicable; the present has become the past; the 'is' should be 'was.' And the more we learn of the nature of things, the more evident is it that what we call rest is only unperceived activity; that seeming peace is silent but strenuous battle. In every part, at every moment, the state of the cosmos is the expression of a transitory adjustment of contending forces; a scene of strife, in which all the combatants fall in turn. What is true of each part, is true of the whole. Natural knowledge tends more and more to the conclusion that "all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth" are the transitory forms of parcels of cosmic substance wending along the road of

evolution, from nebulous potentiality, through endless growths of sun and planet and satellite; through all varieties of matter; through infinite diversities of life and thought; possibly, through modes of being of which we neither have a conception, nor are competent to form any, back to the indefinable latency from which they arose. Thus the most obvious attribute of the cosmos is its impermanence. It assumes the aspect not so much of a permanent entity as of a changeful process, in which naught endures save the flow of energy and the rational order which pervades it.

We have climbed our bean-stalk and have reached a wonderland in which the common and the familiar become things new and strange. In the exploration of the cosmic process thus typified, the highest intelligence of man finds inexhaustible employment; giants are subdued to our service; and the spiritual affections of the contemplative philosopher are engaged by beauties worthy of eternal constancy.

But there is another aspect of the cosmic process, so perfect as a mechanism, so beautiful as a work of art. Where the cosmopoietic energy works through sentient beings, there arises, among its other manifestations, that which we call pain or suffering. This baleful product of evolution increases in quantity and in intensity, with advancing grades of animal organisation, until it attains its highest level in man. Further, the consummation is not reached in man, the mere animal; nor in man, the whole or half savage; but only in man, the member of an organised polity. And it is a necessary consequence of his attempt to live in this way; that is, under those conditions which are essential to the full development of his noblest powers.

Man, the animal, in fact, has worked his way to the headship of the sentient world, and has become the superb animal which he is, in virtue of his success in the struggle for existence. The conditions having been of a certain

order, man's organisation has adjusted itself to them better than that of his competitors in the cosmic strife. In the case of mankind, the self-assertion, the unscrupulous seizing upon all that can be grasped, the tenacious holding of all that can be kept, which constitute the essence of the struggle for existence, have answered. For his successful progress, throughout the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organisation; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity, and his imitativeness; his ruthless and ferocious destructiveness when his anger is roused by opposition.

But, in proportion as men have passed from anarchy to social organisation, and in proportion as civilisation has grown in worth, these deeply ingrained serviceable qualities have become defects. After the manner of successful persons, civilised man would gladly kick down the ladder by which he has climbed. He would be only too pleased to see "the ape and tiger die." But they decline to suit his convenience; and the unwelcome intrusion of these boon companions of his hot youth into the ranged existence of civil life adds pains and griefs, innumerable and immeasurably great, to those which the cosmic process necessarily brings on the mere animal. In fact, civilised man brands all these ape and tiger promptings with the name of sins; he punishes many of the acts which flow from them as crimes; and, in extreme cases, he does his best to put an end to the survival of the fittest of former days by axe and rope.

I have said that civilised man has reached this point; the assertion is perhaps too broad and general; I had better put it that ethical man has attained thereto. The science of ethics professes to furnish us with a reasoned rule of life; to tell us what is right action and why it is so. Whatever differences of opinion may exist among experts, there is a general consensus that the ape and tiger methods for the

struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles.

The hero of our story descended the bean-stalk, and came back to the common world, where fare and work were alike hard; where ugly competitors were much commoner than beautiful princesses; and where the everlasting battle with self was much less sure to be crowned with victory than a turn-to with a giant. We have done the like. Thousands upon thousands of our fellows, thousands of years ago, have preceded us in finding themselves face to face with the same dread problem of evil. They also have seen that the cosmic process is evolution; that it is full of wonder, full of beauty and at the same time full of pain. They have sought to discover the bearing of these great facts on ethics; to find out whether there is, or is not, a sanction for morality in the ways of the cosmos.

Theories of the universe, in which the conception of evolution plays a leading part, were extant at least six centuries before our era. Certain knowledge of them, in the fifth century, reaches us from localities as distant as the valley of the Ganges and the Asiatic coasts of the Ægean. To the early philosophers of Hindostan, no less than to those of Ionia, the salient and characteristic feature of the phenomenal world was its changefulness; the unresting flow of all things, through birth to visible being and thence to not being, in which they could discern no sign of a beginning and for which they saw no prospect of an ending. It was no less plain to some of these antique forerunners of modern philosophy that suffering is the badge of all the tribe of sentient things; that it is no accidental accompaniment, but an essential constituent of the cosmic process. The energetic Greek might find fierce joys in a world in which 'strife is father and king'; but the old Aryan spirit was subdued to quietism in the Indian sage; the mist of suffering which spread over humanity hid everything else from view;

to him life was one with suffering and suffering with life.

In Hindostan, as in Ionia, a period of relatively high and tolerably stable civilisation had succeeded long ages of semi-barbarism and struggle. Out of wealth and security had come leisure and refinement, and, close at their heels, had followed the malady of thought. To the struggle for bare existence, which never ends, though it may be alleviated and partially disguised for a fortunate few, succeeded the struggle to make existence intelligible and to bring the order of things into harmony with the moral sense of man, which also never ends, but, for the thinking few, becomes keener with every increase of knowledge and with every step towards the realisation of a worthy ideal of life.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, the value of civilisation was as apparent as it is now; then, as now, it was obvious that only in the garden of an orderly polity can the finest fruits humanity is capable of bearing be produced. But it had also become evident that the blessings of culture were not unmixed. The garden was apt to turn into a hothouse. The stimulation of the senses, the pampering of the emotions, endlessly multiplied the sources of pleasure. The constant widening of the intellectual field indefinitely extended the range of that specially human faculty of looking before and after, which adds to the fleeting present those old and new worlds of the past and the future, wherein men dwell the more the higher their culture. But that very sharpening of the sense and that subtle refinement of emotion, which brought such a wealth of pleasures, were fatally attended by a proportional enlargement of the capacity for suffering; and the divine faculty of imagination, while it created new heavens and new earths, provided them with the corresponding hells of futile regret for the past and morbid anxiety for the future.³ Finally, the inevitable penalty of overstimulation, exhaustion, opened the

gates of civilisation to its great enemy, ennui; the stale and flat weariness when man delights not, nor woman neither; when all things are vanity and vexation; and life seems not worth living except to escape the bore of dying.

Even purely intellectual progress brings about its revenges. Problems settled in a rough and ready way by rude men, absorbed in action, demand renewed attention and show themselves to be still unread riddles when men have time to think. The beneficent demon, doubt, whose name is Legion and who dwells amongst the tombs of old faiths, enters into mankind and thenceforth refuses to be cast out. Sacred customs, venerable dooms of ancestral wisdom, hallowed by tradition and professing to hold good for all time, are put to the question. Cultured reflection asks for their credentials; judges them by its own standards; finally, gathers those of which it approves into ethical systems, in which the reasoning is rarely much more than a decent pretext for the adoption of foregone conclusions.

One of the oldest and most important elements in such systems is the conception of justice. Society is impossible unless those who are associated agree to observe certain rules of conduct towards one another; its stability depends on the steadiness with which they abide by that agreement; and, so far as they waver, that mutual trust which is the bond of society is weakened or destroyed. Wolves could not hunt in packs except for the real, though unexpressed, understanding that they should not attack one another during the chase. The most rudimentary polity is a pack of men living under the like tacit, or expressed, understanding; and having made the very important advance upon wolf society, that they agree to use the force of the whole body against individuals who violate it and in favour of those who observe it. This observance of a common understanding, with the consequent distribution of punishments and

rewards according to accepted rules, received the name of justice, while the contrary was called injustice. Early ethics did not take much note of the animus of the violator of the rules. But civilisation could not advance far, without the establishment of a capital distinction between the case of involuntary and that of wilful misdeed; between a merely wrong action and a guilty one. And, with increasing refinement of moral appreciation, the problem of desert, which arises out of this distinction, acquired more and more theoretical and practical importance. If life must be given for life, yet it was recognised that the unintentional slayer did not altogether deserve death; and, by a sort of compromise between the public and the private conception of justice, a sanctuary was provided in which he might take refuge from the avenger of blood.

The idea of justice thus underwent a gradual sublimation from punishment and reward according to acts, to punishment and reward according to desert; or, in other words, according to motive. Righteousness, that is, action from right motive, not only became synonymous with justice, but the positive constituent of innocence and the very heart of goodness.

Now when the ancient sage, whether Indian or Greek, who had attained to this conception of goodness, looked the world, and especially human life, in the face, he found it as hard as we do to bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good.

If there is one thing plainer than another, it is that neither the pleasures nor the pains of life, in the merely animal world, are distributed according to desert; for it is admittedly impossible for the lower orders of sentient beings to deserve either the one or the other. If there is a generalisation from the facts of human life which has the assent of

thoughtful men in every age and country, it is that the violator of ethical rules constantly escapes the punishment which he deserves; that the wicked flourishes like a green bay tree, while the righteous begs his bread; that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; that, in the realm of nature, ignorance is punished just as severely as wilful wrong; and that thousands upon thousands of innocent beings suffer for the crime, or the unintentional trespass, of one.

Greek and Semite and Indian are agreed upon this subject. The book of Job is at one with the "Works and Days" and the Buddhist Sutras; the Psalmist and the Preacher of Israel, with the Tragic Poets of Greece. What is a more common motive of the ancient tragedy in fact, than the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things; what is more deeply felt to be true than its presentation of the destruction of the blameless by the work of his own hands; or by the fatal operation of the sins of others. Surely *Œdipus* was pure of heart; it was the natural sequence of events—the cosmic process—which drove him, in all innocence, to slay his father and become the husband of his mother, to the desolation of his people and his own headlong ruin. Or to step, for a moment, beyond the chronological limits I have set myself, what constitutes the sempiternal attraction of *Hamlet* but the appeal to deepest experience of that history of a no less blameless dreamer, dragged, in spite of himself, into a world out of joint; involved in a tangle of crime and misery, created by one of the prime agents of the cosmic process as it works in and through man?

Thus, brought before the tribunal of ethics, the cosmos might well seem to stand condemned. The conscience of man revolted against the moral indifference of nature, and the microcosmic atom should have found the illimitable macrocosm guilty. But few, or none, ventured to record that verdict.

In the great Semitic trial of this issue, Job takes refuge in silence and submission; the Indian and the Greek, less wise, perhaps, attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable and plead for the defendant. To this end, the Greeks invented Theodicies; while the Indians devised what, in its ultimate form, must rather be termed a Cosmodicy. For, though Buddhism recognises gods many and lords many, they are products of the cosmic process; and transitory, however long enduring, manifestations of its eternal activity. In the doctrine of transmigration, whatever its origin, Brahminical and Buddhist speculation found, ready to hand,⁴ the means of constructing a plausible vindication of the ways of the cosmos to man. If this world is full of pain and sorrow; if grief and evil fall, like the rain, upon both the just and the unjust; it is because, like the rain, they are links in the endless chain of natural causation by which past, present, and future are indissolubly connected; and there is no more injustice in the one case than in the other. Every sentient being is reaping as it has sown; if not in this life, then in one or other of the infinite series of antecedent existences of which it is the latest term. The present distribution of good and evil is, therefore, the algebraical sum of accumulated positive and negative deserts; or, rather, it depends on the floating balance of the account. For it was not thought necessary that a complete settlement should ever take place. Arrears might stand over as a sort of 'hanging gale'; a period of celestial happiness just earned might be succeeded by ages of torment in a hideous nether world, the balance still overdue for some remote ancestral error.⁵

Whether the cosmic process looks any more moral than at first, after such a vindication, may perhaps be questioned. Yet this plea of justification is not less plausible than others; and none but very hasty thinkers will reject

it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality; and it may claim such support as the great argument from analogy is capable of supplying.

Everyday experience familiarises us with the facts which are grouped under the name of heredity. Every one of us bears upon him obvious marks of his parentage, perhaps of remoter relationships. More particularly, the sum of tendencies to act in a certain way, which we call "character," is often to be traced through a long series of progenitors and collaterals. So we may justly say that this 'character'—this moral and intellectual essence of a man—does veritably pass over from one fleshly tabernacle to another, and does really transmigrate from generation to generation. In the new-born infant, the character of the stock lies latent, and the Ego is little more than a bundle of potentialities. But, very early, these become actualities; from childhood to age they manifest themselves in dulness or brightness, weakness or strength, viciousness or uprightness; and with each feature modified by confluence with another character, if by nothing else, the character passes on to its incarnation in new bodies.

The Indian philosophers called character, as thus defined, 'karma.'⁶ It is this karma which passed from life to life and linked them in the chain of transmigrations; and they held that it is modified in each life, not merely by confluence of parentage, but by its own acts. They were, in fact, strong believers in the theory, so much disputed just at present, of the hereditary transmission of acquired characters. That the manifestation of the tendencies of a character may be greatly facilitated, or impeded, by conditions, of which self-discipline, or the absence of it, are among the most important, is indubitable; but that the character itself is modified in this way is by no means so

certain ; it is not so sure that the transmitted character of an evil liver is worse, or that of a righteous man better, than that which he received. Indian philosophy, however, did not admit of any doubt on this subject ; the belief in the influence of conditions, notably of self-discipline, on the karma was not merely a necessary postulate of its theory of retribution, but it presented the only way of escape from the endless round of transmigrations.

The earlier forms of Indian philosophy agreed with those prevalent in our own times, in supposing the existence of a permanent reality, or 'substance,' beneath the shifting series of phenomena, whether of matter or of mind. The substance of the cosmos was 'Brahma,' that of the individual man 'Atman' ; and the latter was separated from the former only, if I may so speak, by its phenomenal envelope, by the casing of sensations, thoughts and desires, pleasures and pains, which make up the illusive phantasmagoria of life. This the ignorant take for reality ; their 'Atman' therefore remains eternally imprisoned in delusions, bound by the fetters of desire and scourged by the whip of misery. But the man who has attained enlightenment sees that the apparent reality is mere illusion, or, as was said a couple of thousand years later, that there is nothing good nor bad but thinking makes it so. If the cosmos "is just and of our pleasant vices makes instruments to scourge us," it would seem that the only way to escape from our heritage of evil is to destroy that fountain of desire whence our vices flow ; to refuse any longer to be the instruments of the evolutionary process, and withdraw from the struggle for existence. If the karma is modifiable by self-discipline, if its coarser desires, one after another, can be extinguished, the ultimate fundamental desire of self-assertion, or the desire to be, may also be destroyed.⁷ Then the bubble of illusion will burst, and the

freed individual 'Atman' will lose itself in the universal 'Brahma.'

Such seems to have been the pre-Buddhistic conception of salvation, and of the way to be followed by those who would attain thereto. No more thorough mortification of the flesh has ever been attempted than that achieved by the Indian ascetic anchorite ; no later monachism has so nearly succeeded in reducing the human mind to that condition of impassive quasi-somnambulism, which, but for its acknowledged holiness, might run the risk of being confounded with idiocy.

And this salvation, it will be observed, was to be attained through knowledge, and by action based on that knowledge ; just as the experimenter, who would obtain a certain physical or chemical result, must have a knowledge of the natural laws involved and the persistent disciplined will adequate to carry out all the various operations required. The supernatural, in our sense of the term, was entirely excluded. There was no external power which could affect the sequence of cause and effect which gives rise to karma ; none but the will of the subject of the karma which could put an end to it.

Only one rule of conduct could be based upon the remarkable theory of which I have endeavoured to give a reasoned outline. It was folly to continue to exist when an overplus of pain was certain and the probabilities in favour of the increase of misery with the prolongation of existence, were so overwhelming. Slaying the body only made matters worse ; there was nothing for it but to slay the soul by the voluntary arrest of all its activities. Property, social ties, family affections, common companionship, must be abandoned ; the most natural appetites, even that for food, must be suppressed, or at least minimised ; until all that remained of a man was the impassive, extenuated mendicant monk, self-hypnotised into cataleptic trances, which the deluded

mystic took for foretastes of the final union with Brahma.

The founder of Buddhism accepted the chief postulates demanded by his predecessors. But he was not satisfied with the practical annihilation involved in merging the individual existence in the unconditioned—the Atman in Brahma. It would seem that the admission of the existence of any substance whatever—even of the tenuity of that which has neither quality nor energy and of which no predicate whatever can be asserted—appeared to him to be a danger and a snare. Though reduced to an hypostatised negation, Brahma was not to be trusted; so long as entity was there, it might conceivably resume the weary round of evolution, with all its train of immeasurable miseries. Gautama got rid of even that shade of a shadow of permanent existence by a metaphysical *tour de force* of great interest to the student of philosophy, seeing that it supplies the wanting half of Bishop Berkeley's well-known idealistic argument.

Granting the premises, I am not aware of any escape from Berkeley's conclusion, that the 'substance' of matter is a metaphysical unknown quantity, of the existence of which there is no proof. What Berkeley does not seem to have so clearly perceived is that the non-existence of a substance of mind is equally arguable; and that the result of the impartial applications of his reasonings is the reduction of the All to co-existences and sequences of phenomena, beneath and beyond which there is nothing cognoscible. It is a remarkable indication of the subtlety of Indian speculation that Gautama should have seen deeper than the greatest of modern idealists; though it must be admitted that, if some of Berkeley's reasonings respecting the nature of spirit are pushed home, they reach pretty much the same conclusion.⁸

Accepting the prevalent Brahminical doctrine that the whole cosmos, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, with its popula-

tion of gods and other celestial beings of sentient animals, of Mara and his devils, is incessantly shifting through recurring cycles of production and destruction, in each of which every human being has his transmigratory representative, Gautama proceeded to eliminate substance altogether; and to reduce the cosmos to a mere flow of sensations, emotions, volitions, and thoughts, devoid of any substratum. As, on the surface of a stream of water, we see ripples and whirlpools, which last for a while and then vanish with the causes that gave rise to them, so what seem individual existences are mere temporary associations of phenomena circling round a centre, "like a dog tied to a post." In the whole universe there is nothing permanent, no eternal substance either of mind or of matter. Personality is a metaphysical fancy; and in very truth, not only we, but all things, in the worlds without end of the cosmic phantasmagoria, are such stuff as dreams are made of.

What then becomes of karma? Karma remains untouched. As the peculiar form of energy we call magnetism may be transmitted from a loadstone to a piece of steel, from the steel to a piece of nickel, as it may be strengthened or weakened by the conditions to which it is subjected while resident in each piece, so it seems to have been conceived that karma might be transmitted from one phenomenal association to another by a sort of induction. However this may be, Gautama doubtless had a better guarantee for the abolition of transmigration, when no wrack of substance, either of Atman or Brahma, was left behind; when, in short, a man had but to dream that he willed not to dream, to put an end to all dreaming.

This end of life's dream is Nirvana. What Nirvana is the learned do not agree. But, since the best original authorities tell us there is neither desire nor activity, nor any possibility of phenomenal reappearance for the sage who

has entered Nirvana, it may be safely said of this acme of Buddhistic philosophy—"the rest is silence."⁹

Thus there is no very great practical disagreement between Gautama and his predecessors with respect to the end of action; but it is otherwise as regards the means to that end. With just insight into human nature, Gautama declared extreme ascetic practices to be useless and indeed harmful. The appetites and the passions are not to be abolished by mere mortification of the body; they must, in addition, be attacked on their own ground and conquered by steady cultivation of the mental habits which oppose them; by universal benevolence; by the return of good for evil; by humility; by abstinence from evil thought; in short, by total renunciation of that self-assertion which is the essence of the cosmic process.

Doubtless, it is to these ethical qualities that Buddhism owes its marvellous success.¹⁰ A system which knows no God in a western sense; which denies a soul to man; which counts the belief in immortality a blunder and the hope of it a sin; which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice; which bids men to look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation; which, in its original purity, knew nothing of vows of obedience, abhorred intolerance, and never sought the aid of the secular arm; yet spread over a considerable moiety of the Old World with marvellous rapidity, and is still, with whatever base admixture of foreign superstitions, the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind.

Let us now set our faces westwards, towards Asia Minor and Greece and Italy, to view the rise and progress of another philosophy, apparently independent, but no less pervaded by the conception of evolution.¹¹

The sages of Miletus were pronounced evolutionists; and, however dark may be some of the sayings of Heracleitus of Ephesus, who was probably a con-

temporary of Gautama, no better expressions of the essence of the modern doctrine of evolution can be found than are presented by some of his pithy aphorisms and striking metaphors.¹² Indeed, many of my present auditors must have observed that, more than once, I have borrowed from him in the brief exposition of the theory of evolution with which this discourse commenced.

But when the focus of Greek intellectual activity shifted to Athens, the leading minds concentrated their attention upon ethical problems. Forsaking the study of the macrocosm for that of the microcosm, they lost the key to the thought of the great Ephesian, which, I imagine, is more intelligible to us than it was to Socrates, or to Plato. Socrates, more especially, set the fashion of a kind of inverse agnosticism, by teaching that the problems of physics lie beyond the reach of the human intellect; that the attempt to solve them is essentially vain; that the one worthy object of investigation is the problem of ethical life; and his example was followed by the Cynics and the later Stoics. Even the comprehensive knowledge and the penetrating intellect of Aristotle failed to suggest to him that in holding the eternity of the world, within its present range of mutation, he was making a retrogressive step. The scientific heritage of Heracleitus passed into the hands neither of Plato or Aristotle, but into those of Democritus. But the world was not yet ready to receive the great conceptions of the philosopher of Abdera. It was reserved for the Stoics to return to the track marked out by the earlier philosophers; and, professing themselves disciples of Heracleitus, to develop the idea of evolution systematically. In doing this, they not only omitted some characteristic features of their master's teaching, but they made additions altogether foreign to it. One of the most influential of these importations was the transcendental theism

which had come into vogue. The restless, fiery energy, operating according to law, out of which all things emerge and into which they return, in the endless successive cycles of the great year; which creates and destroys worlds as a wanton child builds up, and anon levels, sand castles on the sea shore; was metamorphosed into a material world-soul and decked out with all the attributes of ideal Divinity; not merely with infinite power and transcendent wisdom, but with absolute goodness.

The consequences of this step were momentous. For if the cosmos is the effect of an immanent, omnipotent, and infinitely beneficent cause, the existence in it of real evil, still less of necessarily inherent evil, is plainly inadmissible.¹³ Yet the universal experience of mankind testified then, as now, that, whether we look within us or without us, evil stares us in the face on all sides; that if anything is real, pain and sorrow and wrong are realities.

It would be a new thing in history if *a priori* philosophers were daunted by the factious opposition of experience; and the Stoics were the last men to allow themselves to be beaten by mere facts. "Give me a doctrine and I will find a reason for it," said Chrysippus. So they perfected, if they did not invent, that ingenious and plausible form of pleading, the Theodicy; for the purpose of showing firstly, that there is no such thing as evil; secondly, that if there is, it is the necessary correlate of good; and, moreover, that it is either due to our own fault, or inflicted for our benefit. Theodicies have been very popular in their time, and I believe that a numerous, though somewhat dwarfed, progeny of them still survives. So far as I know, they are all variations of the theme set forth in those famous six lines of the "Essay on Man," in which Pope sums up Bolingbroke's reminiscences of stoical and other speculations of this kind—

"All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;

All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite
One truth is clear: whatever is is right."

Yet, surely, if there are few more important truths than those enunciated in the first triad, the second is open to very grave objections. That there is a "soul of good in things evil" is unquestionable; nor will any wise man deny the disciplinary value of pain and sorrow. But these considerations do not help us to see why the immense multitude of irresponsible sentient beings, which cannot profit by such discipline, should suffer; nor why, among the endless possibilities open to omnipotence—that of sinless, happy existence among the rest—the actuality in which sin and misery abound should be that selected. Surely it is mere cheap rhetoric to call arguments which have never yet been answered by even the meekest and the least rational of Optimists, suggestions of the pride of reason. As to the concluding aphorism, its fittest place would be as an inscription in letters of mud over the portal of some "stye of Epicurus";¹⁴ for that is where the logical application of it to practice would land men, with every aspiration stifled and every effort paralysed. Why try to set right what is right already? Why strive to improve the best of all possible worlds? Let us eat and drink, for as to-day all is right, so to-morrow all will be.

But the attempt of the Stoics to blind themselves to the reality of evil, as a necessary concomitant of the cosmic process, had less success than that of the Indian philosophers to exclude the reality of good from their purview. Unfortunately, it is much easier to shut one's eyes to good than to evil. Pain and sorrow knock at our doors more loudly than pleasure and happiness; and the prints of their heavy footsteps are less easily effaced. Before the grim realities of practical life the pleasant fictions of optimism vanished. If this were the best of all possible worlds, it neverthe-

less proved itself a very inconvenient habitation of the ideal stage.

The stoical summary of the whole duty of man, "Live according to nature," would seem to imply that the cosmic process is an exemplar for human conduct. Ethics would thus become applied Natural History. In fact, a confused employment of the maxim, in this sense, has done immeasurable mischief in later times. It has furnished an axiomatic foundation for the philosophy of philosophasters and for the moralising of sentimentalists. But the Stoics were, at bottom, not merely noble, but sane, men; and if we look closely into what they really meant by this ill-used phrase, it will be found to present no justification for the mischievous conclusions that have been deduced from it.

In the language of the Stoa, "Nature" was a word of many meanings. There was the "Nature" of the cosmos and the "Nature" of man. In the latter, the animal "nature," which man shares with a moiety of the living part of the cosmos, was distinguished from a higher "nature." Even in the higher nature there were grades of rank. The logical faculty is an instrument which may be turned to account for any purpose. The passions and the emotions are so closely tied to the lower nature that they may be considered to be pathological, rather than normal, phenomena. The one supreme, hegemonic faculty, which constitutes the essential "nature" of man, is most nearly represented by that which, in the language of a later philosophy, has been called the pure reason. It is this "nature" which holds up the ideal of the supreme good and demands absolute submission of the will to its behests. It is this which commands all men to love one another, to return good for evil, to regard one another as fellow-citizens of one great state. Indeed, seeing that the progress towards perfection of a civilised state, or polity, depends on the obedience of its members to these commands, the Stoics sometimes termed

the pure reason the "political nature." Unfortunately, the sense of the adjective has undergone so much modification, that the application of it to that which commands the sacrifice of self to the common good would now sound almost grotesque.¹⁵

But what part is played by the theory of evolution in this view of ethics? So far as I can discern, the ethical system of the Stoics, which is essentially intuitive, and reverences the categorical imperative as strongly as that of any later moralists, might have been just what it was if they had held any other theory; whether that of special creation, on the one side, or that of the eternal existence of the present order on the other.¹⁶ To the Stoic, the cosmos had no importance for the conscience, except in so far as he chose to think it a pedagogue to virtue. The pertinacious optimism of our philosophers hid from them the actual state of the case. It prevented them from seeing that cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the head-quarters of the enemy of ethical nature. The logic of facts was necessary to convince them that the cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not for righteousness, but against it. And it finally drove them to confess that the existence of their ideal "wise man" was incompatible with the nature of things; that even a passable approximation to that ideal was to be attained only at the cost of renunciation of the world and mortification, not merely of the flesh, but of all human affections. The state of perfection was that "apatheia"¹⁷ in which desire, though it may still be felt, is powerless to move the will, reduced to the sole function of executing the commands of pure reason. Even this residuum of activity was to be regarded as a temporary loan, as an efflux of the divine world-pervading spirit, chafing at its imprisonment in the flesh, until such time as death enabled it to return to its source in the all-pervading logos.

I find it difficult to discover any very great difference between Apatheia and Nirvana, except that stoical speculation agrees with pre-Buddhistic philosophy, rather than with the teachings of Gautama, in so far as it postulates a permanent substance equivalent to "Brahma" and "Atman"; and that, in stoical practice, the adoption of the life of the mendicant cynic was held to be more a counsel of perfection than an indispensable condition of the higher life.

Thus the extremes touch. Greek thought and Indian thought set out from ground common to both, diverge widely, develop under very different physical and moral conditions, and finally converge to practically the same end.

The Vedas and the Homeric epos set before us a world of rich and vigorous life, full of joyous fighting men

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine . . .

and who were ready to brave the very Gods themselves when their blood was up. A few centuries pass away, and under the influence of civilisation the descendants of these men are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"—frank pessimists, or, at best, make-believe optimists. The courage of the warlike stock may be as hardly tried as before, perhaps more hardly, but the enemy is self. The hero has become a monk. The man of action is replaced by the quietest, whose highest aspiration is to be the passive instrument of the divine Reason. By the Tiber, as by the Ganges, ethical man admits that the cosmos is too strong for him; and, destroying every bond which ties him to it by ascetic discipline, he seeks salvation in absolute renunciation.¹⁸

Modern thought is making a fresh start from the base whence Indian and Greek philosophy set out; and, the human mind being very much what it

was six-and-twenty centuries ago, there is no ground for wonder if it presents indications of a tendency to move along the old lines to the same results.

We are more than sufficiently familiar with modern pessimism, at least as a speculation; for I cannot call to mind that any of its present votaries have sealed their faith by assuming the rags and the bowl of the mendicant Bhikku, or the cloak and the wallet of the Cynic. The obstacles placed in the way of sturdy vagrancy by an unphilosophical police have, perhaps, proved too formidable for philosophical consistency. We also know modern speculative optimism, with its perfectibility of the species, reign of peace, and lion and lamb transformation scenes; but one does not hear so much of it as one did forty years ago; indeed, I imagine it is to be met with more commonly at the tables of the healthy and wealthy, than in the congregations of the wise. The majority of us, I apprehend, profess neither pessimism nor optimism. We hold that the world is neither so good, nor so bad, as it conceivably might be; and, as most of us have reason, now and again, to discover that it can be. Those who have failed to experience the joys that make life worth living are, probably, in as small a minority as those who have never known the griefs that rob existence of its savour and turn its richest fruits into mere dust and ashes.

Further, I think I do not err in assuming that, however diverse their views on philosophical and religious matters, most men are agreed that the proportion of good and evil in life may be very sensibly affected by human action. I never heard anybody doubt that the evil may be thus increased, or diminished; and it would seem to follow that good must be similarly susceptible of addition or subtraction. Finally, to my knowledge, nobody professes to doubt that, so far forth as we possess a power of bettering things, it is our paramount duty to use it and to train all our intellect and energy to this supreme service of our kind.

Hence the pressing interest of the question, to what extent modern progress in natural knowledge, and, more especially, the general outcome of that progress in the doctrine of evolution, is competent to help us in the great work of helping one another?

The propounders of what are called the "ethics of evolution," when the 'evolution of ethics' would usually better express the object of their speculations, adduce a number of more or less interesting facts and more or less sound arguments, in favour of the origin of the moral sentiments, in the same way as other natural phenomena, by a process of evolution. I have little doubt, for my own part, that they are on the right track; but as the immoral sentiments have no less been evolved, there is, so far, as much natural sanction for the one as the other. The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist. Cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about; but, in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before. Some day, I doubt not, we shall arrive at an understanding of the evolution of the æsthetic faculty; but all the understanding in the world will neither increase nor diminish the force of the intuition that this is beautiful and that is ugly.

There is another fallacy which appears to me to pervade the so-called "ethics of evolution." It is the notion that because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organisation by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent 'survival of the fittest'; therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them towards perfection. I suspect that this fallacy has arisen out of the unfortunate ambiguity of the phrase 'survival of the fittest.' 'Fittest' has a connotation of 'best'; and about 'best' there hangs a moral flavour. In

cosmic nature, however, what is 'fittest' depends upon the condition. Long since,¹⁹ I ventured to point out that if our hemisphere were to cool again, the survival of the fittest might bring about, in the vegetable kingdom, a population of more and more stunted and humbler and humbler organisms, until the 'fittest' that survived might be nothing but lichens, diatoms, and such microscopic organisms as those which give red snow its colour; while, if it became hotter, the pleasant valleys of the Thames and Isis might be uninhabitable by any animated beings save those that flourish in a tropical jungle. They, as the fittest, the best adapted to the changed conditions, would survive.

Men in society are undoubtedly subject to the cosmic process. As among other animals, multiplication goes on without cessation, and involves severe competition for the means of support. The struggle for existence tends to eliminate those less fitted to adapt themselves to the circumstances of their existence. The strongest, the most self-assertive, tend to tread down the weaker. But the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater the more rudimentary its civilisation. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.²⁰

As I have already urged, the practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows;

its influence is directed, not so much to the survival of the fittest, as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence. It demands that each man who enters into the enjoyment of the advantages of a polity shall be mindful of his debt to those who have laboriously constructed it; and shall take heed that no act of his weakens the fabric in which he has been permitted to live. Laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process and reminding the individual of his duty to the community, to the protection and influence of which he owes, if not existence itself, at least the life of something better than a brutal savage.

It is from neglect of these plain considerations that the fanatical individualism²¹ of our time attempts to apply the analogy of cosmic nature to society. Once more we have a misapplication of the stoical injunction to follow nature; the duties of the individual to the state are forgotten, and his tendencies to self-assertion are dignified by the name of rights. It is seriously debated whether the members of a community are justified in using their combined strength to constrain one of their number to contribute his share to the maintenance of it; or even to prevent him from doing his best to destroy it. The struggle for existence, which has done such admirable work in cosmic nature, must, it appears, be equally beneficent in the ethical sphere. Yet if that which I have insisted upon is true; if the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends; if the imitation of it by man is inconsistent with the first principles of ethics; what becomes of this surprising theory?

Let us undersand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it. It may seem an audacious proposal thus to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm and to set man to subdue nature to his higher ends; but I venture

to think that the great intellectual difference between the ancient times with which we have been occupied and our day, lies in the solid foundation we have acquired for the hope that such an enterprise may meet with a certain measure of success.

The history of civilisation details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the cosmos. Fragile reed as he may be, man, as Pascal says, is a thinking reed:²² there lies within him a fund of energy, operating intelligently and so far akin to that which pervades the universe, that it is competent to influence and modify the cosmic process. In virtue of his intelligence, the dwarf bends the Titan to his will. In every family, in every polity that has been established, the cosmic process in man has been restrained and otherwise modified by law and custom; in surrounding nature, it has been similarly influenced by the art of the shepherd, the agriculturist, the artisan. As civilisation has advanced, so has the extent of this interference increased; until the organised and highly developed sciences and arts of the present day have endowed man with a command over the course of non-human nature greater than that once attributed to the magicians. The most impressive, I might say startling, of these changes have been brought about in the course of the last two centuries; while a right comprehension of the process of life and of the means of influencing its manifestations is only just dawning upon us. We do not yet see our way beyond generalities; and we are befogged by the obtrusion of false analogies and crude anticipations. But Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, have all had to pass through similar phases, before they reached the stage at which their influence became an important factor in human affairs. Physiology, Psychology, Ethics, Political Science, must submit to the same ordeal. Yet it seems to me irrational to doubt that, at no distant period, they will work as

great a revolution in the sphere of practice.

The theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations. If, for millions of years, our globe has taken the upward road, yet, some time, the summit will be reached and the downward route commenced. The most daring imagination will hardly venture upon the suggestion that the power and the intelligence of man can ever arrest the procession of the great year.

Moreover, the cosmic nature born with us and, to a large extent, necessary for our maintenance, is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, and it would be folly to imagine that a few centuries will suffice to subdue its masterfulness to purely ethical ends. Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts. But, on the other hand, I see no limit to the extent to which intelligence and will, guided by sound principles of investigation, and organised in common effort, may modify the conditions of existence, for a period longer than that now covered by history. And much may be done to change the nature of man himself.²³ The intelligence which has converted the brother of the wolf into the faithful guardian of the flock ought to be able to do something towards curbing the instincts of savagery in civilised men.

But if we may permit ourselves a larger hope of abatement of the essential evil of the world than was possible to those who, in the infancy of exact knowledge, faced the problem of existence more than a score of centuries ago, I deem it an essential condition of the realisation of that hope that we should cast aside the notion that escape from pain and sorrow is the proper object of life.

We have long since emerged from the heroic childhood of our race, when good and evil could be met with the same "frolic welcome"; the attempts to escape from evil, whether Indian or Greek, have ended in flight from the battle-field; it remains to us to throw aside the youthful over-confidence and the no less youthful discouragement of nonage. We are grown men, and must play the man

strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,

cherishing the good that falls in our way, and bearing the evil, in and around us, with stout hearts set on diminishing it. So far, we all may strive in one faith towards one hope:

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down,
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

. . . . but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note may yet be done. (24)

NOTES

Note 1 (p. 39).

I have been careful to speak of the "appearance" of cyclical evolution presented by living things; for on critical examination, it will be found that the course of vegetable and of animal life is not exactly represented by the figure of a cycle which returns into itself. What actually happens, in all but the lowest organisms, is that one part of the growing germ (*A*) gives rise to tissues and organs; while another part (*B*) remains in its primitive condition, or is but

slightly modified. The moiety *A* becomes the body of the adult and, sooner or later, perishes, while portions of the moiety *B* are detached and, as offspring, continue the life of the species. Thus, if we trace back an organism along the direct line of descent from its remotest ancestor, *B*, as a whole, has never suffered death; portions of it, only, have been cast off and died in each individual offspring.

Everybody is familiar with the way in which the "suckers" of a strawberry plant behave. A thin cylinder of living tissue keeps on growing

at its free end, until it attains a considerable length. At successive intervals, it develops buds which grow into strawberry plants; and these become independent by the death of the parts of the sucker which connect them. The rest of the sucker, however, may go on living and growing indefinitely, and, circumstances remaining favourable, there is no obvious reason why it should ever die. The living substance *B*, in a manner, answers to the sucker. If we could restore the continuity which was once possessed by the portions of *B*, contained in all the individuals of a direct line of descent, they would form a sucker, or *stolon*, on which these individuals would be strung, and which would never have wholly died.

A species remains unchanged so long as the potentiality of development resident in *B* remains unaltered; so long, *e.g.*, as the buds of the strawberry sucker tend to become typical strawberry plants. In the case of the progressive evolution of a species, the developmental potentiality of *B* becomes of a higher and higher order. In retrogressive evolution, the contrary would be the case. The phenomena of atavism seem to show that retrogressive evolution, that is, the return of a species to one or other of its earlier forms, is a possibility to be reckoned with. The simplification of structure, which is so common in the parasitic members of a group, however, does not properly come under this head. The worm-like, limbless *Lernæa* has no resemblance to any of the stages of development of the many-limbed active animals of the group to which it belongs.

Note 2 (p. 39).

Heracleitus says, Ποταμῷ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι δις ἐμβῆναι τῷ αὐτῷ; but, to be strictly accurate, the river remains, though the water of which it is composed changes—just as a man retains his identity though the whole substance of his body is constantly shifting.

This is put very well by Seneca (Ep. lvii. i. 20, Ed. Ruhkopf): “Corpora nostra rapiuntur fluminum more, quidquid vides currit cum tempore; nihil ex his quæ videmus manet. Ego ipse dum loquor mutari ista, mutatus sum. Hoc est quod ait Heraclitus ‘In idem flumen bis non descendimus.’ Manet idem fluminis nomen, aqua transmissa est. Hoc in amne manifestius est quam in homine, sed nos quoque non minus velox cursus prætervehit.”

Note 3 (p. 41).

“Multa bona nostra nobis nocent, timoris enim tormentum memoria reducit, providentia anticipat. Nemo tantum præsentibus miser est.” (Seneca, Ed. v. 7.)

Among the many wise and weighty aphorisms

of the Roman Bacon, few sound the realities of life more deeply than “Multa bona nostra nobis nocent.” If there is a soul of good in things evil, it is at least equally true that there is a soul of evil in things good: for things, like men, have “les défauts de leurs qualités.” It is one of the last lessons one learns from experience, but not the least important, that a heavy tax is levied upon all forms of success; and that failure is one of the commonest disguises assumed by blessings.

Note 4 (p. 43).

“There is within the body of every man a soul which, at the death of the body, flies away from it like a bird out of a cage, and enters upon a new life . . . either in one of the heavens or one of the hells or on this earth. The only exception is the rare case of a man having in this life acquired a true knowledge of God. According to the pre-Buddhistic theory, the soul of such a man goes along the path of the Gods to God, and, being united with Him, enters upon an immortal life in which his individuality is not extinguished. In the latter theory, his soul is directly absorbed into the Great Soul, is lost in it, and has no longer any independent existence. The souls of all other men enter, after the death of the body, upon a new existence in one or other of the many different modes of being. If in heaven or hell, the soul itself becomes a god or demon without entering a body; all superhuman beings, save the great gods, being looked upon as not eternal, but merely temporary creatures. If the soul returns to earth it may or may not enter a new body; and this either of a human being, an animal, a plant, or even a material object. For all these are possessed of souls, and there is no essential difference between these souls and the souls of men—all being alike mere sparks of the Great Spirit, who is the only real existence.” (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1881, p. 83.)

For what I have said about Indian Philosophy, I am particularly indebted to the luminous exposition of primitive Buddhism and its relations to earlier Hindu thought, which is given by Prof. Rhys Davids in his remarkable *Hibbert Lectures* for 1881, and *Buddhism* (1890). The only apology I can offer for the freedom with which I have borrowed from him in these notes, is my desire to leave no doubt as to my indebtedness. I have also found Dr. Oldenberg’s *Buddha* (Ed. 2, 1890) very helpful. The origin of the theory of transmigration stated in the above extract is an unsolved problem. That it differs widely from the Egyptian metempsychosis is clear. In fact, since men usually people the other world with phantoms of this, the Egyptian doctrine would seem to presuppose the Indian as a more archaic belief.

Prof. Rhys Davids has fully insisted upon the ethical importance of the transmigration

theory. "One of the latest speculations now being put forward among ourselves would seek to explain each man's character, and even his outward condition in life, by the character he inherited from his ancestors, a character gradually formed during a practically endless series of past existences, modified only by the conditions into which he was born, those very conditions being also, in like manner, the last result of a practically endless series of past causes. Gotama's speculation might be stated in the same words. But it attempted also to explain, in a way different from that which would be adopted by the exponents of the modern theory, that strange problem which it is also the motive of the wonderful drama of the book of Job to explain—the fact that the actual distribution here of good fortune, or misery, is entirely independent of the moral qualities which men call good or bad. We cannot wonder that a teacher, whose whole system was so essentially an ethical reformation, should have felt it incumbent upon him to seek an explanation of this apparent injustice. And all the more so, since the belief he had inherited, the theory of the transmigration of souls, had provided a solution perfectly sufficient to any one who could accept that belief." (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 93.) I should venture to suggest the substitution of 'largely' for 'entirely' in the foregoing passage. Whether a ship makes a good or a bad voyage is largely independent of the conduct of the captain, but it is largely affected by that conduct. Though powerless before a hurricane he may weather many a bad gale.

Note 5 (p. 43).

The outward condition of the soul is, in each new birth, determined by its actions in a previous birth; but by each action in succession, and not by the balance struck after the evil has been reckoned off against the good. A good man who has once uttered a slander may spend a hundred thousand years as a god, in consequence of his goodness, and when the power of his good actions is exhausted, may be born as a dumb man on account of his transgression; and a robber who has once done an act of mercy, may come to life in a king's body as the result of his virtue, and then suffer torments for ages in hell or as a ghost without a body, or be re-born many times as a slave or an outcast, in consequence of his evil life.

"There is no escape, according to this theory, from the result of any act; though it is only the consequences of its own acts that each soul has to endure. The force has been set in motion by itself and can never stop; and its effect can never be foretold. If evil, it can never be modified or prevented, for it depends on a cause already completed, that is now for ever beyond the soul's control. There is even no continuing consciousness, no memory of the

past that could guide the soul to any knowledge of its fate. The only advantage open to it is to add in this life to the sum of its good actions, that it may bear fruit with the rest. And even this can only happen in some future life under essentially the same conditions as the present one: subject, like the present one, to old age, decay, and death; and affording opportunity, like the present one, for the commission of errors, ignorances, or sins, which in their turn must inevitably produce their due effect of sickness, disability, or woe. Thus is the soul tossed about from life to life, from billow to billow in the great ocean of transmigration. And there is no escape save for the very few, who, during their birth as men, attain to a right knowledge of the Great Spirit: and thus enter into immortality, or, as the later philosophers taught, are absorbed into the Divine Essence.' (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 85, 86.)

The state after death thus imagined by the Hindu philosophers has a certain analogy to the purgatory of the Roman Church; except that escape from it is dependent, not on a divine decree modified, it may be, by sacerdotal or saintly intercession, but by the acts of the individual himself; and that while ultimate emergence into heavenly bliss of the good, or well-prayed for, Catholic is professedly assured, the chances in favour of the attainment of absorption, or of Nirvana, by any individual Hindu are extremely small.

Note 6 (p. 43).

"That part of the then prevalent transmigration theory which could not be proved false seemed to meet a deeply felt necessity, seemed to supply a moral cause which would explain the unequal distribution here of happiness or woe, so utterly inconsistent with the present characters of men." Gautama "still therefore talked of men's previous existence, but by no means in the way that he is generally represented to have done." What he taught was "the transmigration of character." He held that after the death of any being, whether human or not, there survived nothing at all but that being's 'Karma,' the result, that is, of its mental and bodily actions. Every individual, whether human or divine, was the last inheritor and the last result of the Karma of a long series of past individuals—a series so long that its beginning is beyond the reach of calculation, and its end will be coincident with the destruction of the world." (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 92.)

In the theory of evolution, the tendency of a germ to develop according to a certain specific type, *e.g.* of the kidney bean seed to grow into a plant having all the characters of *Phaseolus vulgaris*, is its 'Karma.' It is the "last inheritor and the last result" of all the conditions that have affected a line of ancestry

which goes back for many millions of years to the time when life first appeared on the earth. The moiety B of the substance of the bean plant (see *Note 1*) is the last link in a once continuous chain extending from the primitive living substance: and the characters of the successive species to which it has given rise are the manifestations of its gradually modified Karma. As Prof. Rhys Davids aptly says, the snowdrop "is a snowdrop and not an oak, and just that kind of snowdrop, because it is the outcome of the Karma of an endless series of past existences." (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 114.)

Note 7 (p. 44).

"It is interesting to notice that the very point which is the weakness of the theory—the supposed concentration of the effect of the Karma in one new being—presented itself to the early Buddhists themselves as a difficulty. They avoided it, partly by explaining that it was a particular thirst in the creature dying (a craving, *Tanhā*, which plays otherwise a great part in the Buddhist theory) which actually caused the birth of the new individual who was to inherit the Karma of the former one. But, how this took place, how the craving desire produced this effect, was acknowledged to be a mystery patent only to a Buddha." (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 95.)

Among the many parallelisms of Stoicism and Buddhism, it is curious to find one for this *Tanhā*, 'thirst,' or 'craving desire' for life. Seneca writes (*Epist. lxi. 18*): "*Si enim ullum aliud est bonum quam honestum, sequetur nos aviditas vitæ aviditas rerum vitam instrumentum: quod est intolerabile infinitum, vagum.*"

Note 8 (p. 45).

"The distinguishing characteristic of Buddhism was that it started a new line, that it looked upon the deepest questions men have to solve from an entirely different standpoint. It swept away from the field of its vision the whole of the great soul-theory which had hitherto so completely filled and dominated the minds of the superstitious and the thoughtful alike. For the first time in the history of the world, it proclaimed a salvation which each man could gain for himself and by himself, in this world, during this life, without any the least reference to God, or to Gods, either great or small. Like the Upanishads, it placed the first importance on knowledge; but it was no longer a knowledge of God, it was a clear perception of the real nature, as they supposed it to be, of men and things. And it added to the necessity of knowledge, the necessity of purity, of courtesy, of uprightness, of peace and of a universal love

far reaching, grown great and beyond measure." (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 29.)

The contemporary Greek philosophy takes an analogous direction. According to Heraclitus, the universe was made neither by Gods nor men; but, from all eternity, has been, and to all eternity, will be, immortal fire, glowing and fading in due measure. (Mullach, *Heracliti Fragmenta*, 27.) And the part assigned by his successors, the Stoics, to the knowledge and the volition of the 'wise man' made their Divinity (for logical thinkers) a subject for compliments, rather than a power to be reckoned with. In Hindu speculation the 'Arahat,' still more the 'Buddha,' becomes the superior of Brahma; the stoical 'wise man' is, at least, the equal of Zeus.

Berkeley affirms over and over again that no idea can be formed of a soul or spirit—"If any man shall doubt of the truth of what is here delivered, let him but reflect and if he can form an idea of power or active being; and whether he hath ideas of two principal powers marked by the names of *will* and *understanding* distinct from each other, as well as from a third idea of substance or being in general, with a relative notion of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid power, which is signified by the name *soul* or *spirit*. This is what some hold: but, so far as I can see, the words *will*, *soul*, *spirit*, do not stand for different ideas or, in truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which, being an agent, cannot be like unto or represented by any idea whatever [though it must be owned at the same time, that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of these words]." (*The Principles of Human Knowledge*, lxxvi. See also §§ lxxxix., cxxxv., cxlv.)

It is open to discussion, I think, whether it is possible to have 'some notion' of that of which we can form no 'idea.'

Berkeley attaches several predicates to the "perceiving active being mind, spirit, soul, or myself" (Parts I. II.). It is said, for example, to be "indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and incorruptible." The predicate indivisible, though negative in form, has highly positive consequences. For, if 'perceiving active being' is strictly indivisible, man's soul must be one with the Divine spirit: which is good Hindu or Stoical doctrine, but hardly orthodox Christian philosophy. If, on the other hand, the 'substance' of active perceiving 'being' is actually divided into the one Divine and innumerable human entities, how can the predicate 'indivisible' be rigorously applicable to it?

Taking the words cited, as they stand, they amount to the denial of the possibility of any knowledge of substance. 'Matter' having been resolved into mere affections of 'spirit,'

'spirit' melts away into an admittedly inconceivable and unknowable hypostasis of thought and power—consequently the existence of anything in the universe beyond a flow of phenomena is a purely hypothetical assumption. Indeed a pyrrhonist might raise the objection that if 'esse' is 'percipi,' spirit itself can have no existence except as a perception, hypostatized into a 'self,' or as a perception of some other spirit. In the former case, objective reality vanishes; in the latter, there would seem to be the need of an infinite series of spirits each perceiving the others.

It is curious to observe how very closely the phraseology of Berkeley sometimes approaches that of the Stoics: thus (cxlviii.) "It seems to be a *general pretence of the unthinking herd that they cannot see God*.....But, alas, we need only open our eyes to see the Sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view, than we do any of our fellow-creatures.....we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the Divinity: everything we see, hear, feel, or any wise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God".....cxlix. "It is therefore plain, that *nothing can be more evident to any one that is capable of the least reflection, than the existence of God*, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, *in whom we live and move and have our being*." cl. "[But you will say hath Nature no share in the production of natural things, and must they be all ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God?.....if by *Nature* is meant some being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of nature and things perceived by sense, I must confess that word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible meaning annexed to it.] Nature in this acceptation is a vain *Chimæra* introduced by those heathens, who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God."

Compare Seneca (*De Beneficiis*, iv. 7):

"Natura, inquit, hæc mihi præstat. Non intelligis te, quum hoc dicis, mutare Nomen Deo? Quid enim est aliud Natura quam Deus, et divina ratio, toti mundo et partibus ejus inserta? Quoties voles tibi licet aliter hunc auctorem rerum nostrarum compellare, et Jovem illum optimum et maximum rite dices, et tonantem, et statorem: qui non, ut historici tradiderunt, ex eo quod post votum susceptum acies Romanorum fugientum stetit, sed quod stant beneficio ejus omnia, stator, stabilitorque est: hunc eundem et fatum si dixeris, non mentieris, nam quum fatum nihil aliud est, quam series implexa causarum, ille est prima omnium causa, ea qua cæteræ pendent." It would appear, therefore, that the good Bishop is somewhat hard upon the 'heathen,' of whose words his own might be a paraphrase.

There is yet another direction in which Berkeley's philosophy, I will not say agrees with Gautama's, but at any rate helps to make a fundamental dogma of Buddhism intelligible.

"I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as often as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by the same power, it is obliterated, and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very properly denominate the mind active. This much is certain and grounded on experience. . . ." (*Principles*, xxviii.)

A good many of us, I fancy, have reason to think that experience tells them very much the contrary; and are painfully familiar with the obsession of the mind by ideas which cannot be obliterated by any effort of the will and steadily refuse to make way for others. But what I desire to point out is that if Gautama was equally confident that he could 'make and unmake' ideas—then, since he had resolved self into a group of ideal phantoms—the possibility of abolishing self by volition naturally followed.

Note 9 (p. 46).

According to Buddhism, the relation of one life to the next is merely that borne by the flame of one lamp to the flame of another lamp which is set alight by it. To the 'Arahat' or adept "no outward form, no compound thing, no creature, no creator, no existence of any kind, must appear to be other than a temporary collocation of its component parts, fated inevitably to be dissolved."—(Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 211.)

The self is nothing but a group of phenomena held together by the desire of life; when that desire shall have ceased, "the Karma of that particular chain of lives will cease to influence any longer any distinct individual, and there will be no more birth; for birth, decay, and death, grief, lamentation, and despair will have come, so far as regards that chain of lives, for ever to an end."

The state of mind of the Arahat in which the desire of life has ceased is Nirvana. Dr. Oldenberg has very acutely and patiently considered the various interpretations which have been attached to 'Nirvana' in the work to which I have referred (pp. 285 *et seq.*). The result of his and other discussions of the question may I think be briefly stated thus:

1. Logical deduction from the predicates attached to the term 'Nirvana' strips it of all reality, conceivability, or perceivability, whether by Gods or men. For all practical purposes, therefore, it comes to exactly the same thing as annihilation.

2. But it is not annihilation in the ordinary

sense, inasmuch as it could take place in the living Arahāt or Buddha.

3. And, since, for the faithful Buddhist, that which was abolished in the Arahāt was the possibility of further pain, sorrow, or sin; and that which was attained was perfect peace; his mind directed itself exclusively to this joyful consummation, and personified the negation of all conceivable existence and of all pain into a positive bliss. This was all the more easy, as Gautama refused to give any dogmatic definition of Nirvana. There is something analogous in the way in which people commonly talk of the 'happy release' of a man who has been long suffering from mortal disease. According to their own views, it must always be extremely doubtful whether the man will be any happier after the 'release' than before. But 'they' do not choose to look at the matter in this light.

The popular notion that, with practical, if not metaphysical, annihilation in view, Buddhism must needs be a sad and gloomy faith seems to be inconsistent with fact; on the contrary, the prospect of Nirvana fills the true believer, not merely with cheerfulness, but with an ecstatic desire to reach it.

Note 10 (p. 46).

The influence of the picture of the personal qualities of Gautama, afforded by the legendary anecdotes which rapidly grew into a biography of the Buddha; and by the birth stories, which coalesced with the current folk-lore, and were intelligible to all the world, doubtless played a great part. Further, although Gautama appears not to have meddled with the caste system, he refused to recognize any distinction, save that of perfection in the way of salvation, among his followers; and by such teaching, no less than by the inculcation of love and benevolence to all sentient beings, he practically levelled every social, political, and racial barrier. A third important condition was the organization of the Buddhists into monastic communities for the stricter professors, while the laity were permitted a wide indulgence in practice and were allowed to hope for accommodation in some of the temporary abodes of bliss. With a few hundred thousand years of immediate paradise in sight, the average man could be content to shut his eyes to what might follow.

Note 11 (p. 46).

In ancient times it was the fashion, even among the Greeks themselves, to derive all Greek

wisdom from Eastern sources; not long ago it was as generally denied that Greek philosophy had any connection with Oriental speculation; it seems probable, however, that the truth lies between these extremes.

The Ionian intellectual movement does not stand alone. It is only one of several sporadic indications of the working of some powerful mental ferment over the whole of the area comprised between the Ægean and Northern Hindostan during the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before our era. In these three hundred years, prophetism attained its apogee among the Semites of Palestine; Zoroasterism grew and became the creed of a conquering race, the Iranic Aryans; Buddhism rose and spread with marvellous rapidity among the Aryans of Hindostan; while scientific naturalism took its rise among the Aryans of Ionia. It would be difficult to find another three centuries which have given birth to four events of equal importance. All the principal existing religions of mankind have grown out of the first three: while the fourth is the little spring, now swollen into the great stream of positive science. So far as physical possibilities go, the prophet Jeremiah and the oldest Ionian philosopher might have met and conversed. If they had done so, they would probably have disagreed a good deal; and it is interesting to reflect that their discussions might have embraced questions which, at the present day, are still hotly controverted.

The old Ionian philosophy, then, seems to be only one of many results of a stirring of the moral and intellectual life of the Aryan and the Semitic populations of Western Asia. The conditions of this general awakening were doubtless manifold; but there is one which modern research has brought into great prominence. This is the existence of extremely ancient and highly advanced societies in the valleys of the Euphrates and of the Nile.

It is now known that, more than a thousand—perhaps more than two thousand—years before the sixth century B.C., civilization had attained a relatively high pitch among the Babylonians and the Egyptians. Not only had painting, sculpture, architecture, and the industrial arts reached a remarkable development; but in Chaldæa, at any rate, a vast amount of knowledge had been accumulated and methodized, in the departments of grammar, mathematics, astronomy, and natural history. Where such traces of the scientific spirit are visible, naturalistic speculation is rarely far off, though, so far as I know, no remains of an Accadian, or Egyptian, philosophy, properly so called, have yet been recovered.

Geographically, Chaldæa occupied a central position among the oldest seats of civilisation. Commerce, largely aided by the intervention of those colossal pedlars, the Phœnicians, had brought Chaldæa into connection with all of

them, for a thousand years before the epoch at present under consideration. And in the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries, the Assyrian, the depositary of Chaldæan civilisation, as the Macedonian and the Roman, at a later date, were the depositaries of Greek culture, had added irresistible force to the other agencies for the wide distribution of Chaldæan literature, art, and science.

I confess that I find it difficult to imagine that the Greek immigrants—who stood in somewhat the same relation to the Babylonians and the Egyptians as the later Germanic barbarians to the Romans of the Empire—should not have been immensely influenced by the new life with which they became acquainted. But there is abundant direct evidence of the magnitude of this influence in certain spheres. I suppose it is not doubted that the Greek went to school with the Oriental for his primary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and that Semitic theology supplied him with some of his mythological lore. Nor does there now seem to be any question about the large indebtedness of Greek art to that of Chaldæa and that of Egypt.

But the manner of that indebtedness is very instructive. The obligation is clear, but its limits are no less definite. Nothing better exemplifies the indomitable originality of the Greeks than the relations of their art to that of the Orientals. Far from being subdued into mere imitators by the technical excellence of their teachers, they lost no time in bettering the instruction they received, using their models as mere stepping stones on the way to those unsurpassed and unsurpassable achievements which are all their own. The shibboleth of Art is the human figure. The ancient Chaldæans and Egyptians, like the modern Japanese, did wonders in the representation of birds and quadrupeds; they even attained to something more than respectability in human portraiture. But their utmost efforts never brought them within range of the best Greek embodiments of the grace of womanhood, or of the severer beauty of manhood.

It is worth while to consider the probable effect upon the acute and critical Greek mind of the conflict of ideas, social, political, and theological, which arose out of the conditions of life in the Asiatic colonies. The Ionian politics had passed through the whole gamut of social and political changes, from patriarchal and occasionally oppressive kingship to rowdy and still more burdensome mobship—no doubt with infinitely eloquent and copious argumentation, on both sides, at every stage of their progress towards that arbitrament of force which settles most political questions. The marvellous speculative faculty, latent in the Ionian, had come in contact with Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Phœnician theologies and cosmogonies; with the illuminati of Orphism and the fanatics and dreamers of the Mysteries; possibly with

Buddhism and Zoroasterism; possibly even with Judaism. And it has been observed that the mutual contradictions of antagonistic supernaturalisms are apt to play a large part among the generative agencies of naturalism.

Thus, various external influences may have contributed to the rise of philosophy among the Ionian Greeks of the sixth century. But the assimilative capacity of the Greek mind—its power of Hellenizing whatever it touched—has here worked so effectually, that, so far as I can learn, no indubitable traces of such extraneous contributions are now allowed to exist by the most authoritative historians of Philosophy. Nevertheless, I think it must be admitted that the coincidences between the Heracleito-stoical doctrines and those of the older Hindu philosophy are extremely remarkable. In both, the cosmos pursues an eternal succession of cyclical changes. The great year, answering to the Kalpa, covers an entire cycle from the origin of the universe as a fluid to its dissolution in fire—"Humor initium, ignis exitus mundi," as Seneca has it. In both systems, there is immanent in the cosmos a source of energy, Brahma, or the Logos, which works according to fixed laws. The individual soul is an efflux of this world-spirit, and returns to it. Perfection is attainable only by individual effort, through ascetic discipline, and is rather a state of painlessness than of happiness; if indeed it can be said to be a state of anything, save the negation of perturbing emotion. The hatchment motto "*In Cœlo Quies*" would serve both Hindu and Stoic; and absolute quiet is not easily distinguishable from annihilation.

Zoroasterism, which, geographically, occupies a position intermediate between Hellenism and Hinduism, agrees with the latter in recognising the essential evil of the cosmos; but differs from both in its intensely anthropomorphic personification of the two antagonistic principles, to the one of which it ascribes all the good; and, to the other, all the evil. In fact, it assumes the existence of two worlds, one good and one bad; the latter created by the evil power for the purpose of damaging the former. The existing cosmos is a mere mixture of the two, and the 'last judgment' is a root-and-branch extirpation of the work of Ahriman.

Note 12 (p.46).

There is no snare in which the feet of a modern student of ancient lore are more easily entangled, than that which is spread by the similarity of the language of antiquity to modern modes of expression. I do not presume to interpret the obscurest of Greek philosophers; all I wish is to point out, that his words, in the sense accepted by competent interpreters, fit modern ideas singularly well.

So far as the general theory of evolution goes there is no difficulty. The aphorism about the river; the figure of the child playing on the shore; the kingship and fatherhood of strife, seem decisive. The ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μίη expresses, with singular aptness, the cyclical aspect of the one process of organic evolution in individual plants and animals: yet it may be a question whether the Heracleitean strife included any distinct conception of the struggle for existence. Again, it is tempting to compare the part played by the Heracleitean 'fire' with that ascribed by the moderns to heat, or rather to that cause of motion of which heat is one expression; and a little ingenuity might find a foreshadowing of the doctrine of the conservation of energy, in the saying that all the things are changed into fire and fire into all things, as gold into goods and goods into gold.

Note 13 (p. 47).

Pope's lines in the *Essay on Man* (Ep. i. 267-8),

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul,"

simply paraphrase Seneca's "quem in hoc mundo locum deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus: quod est illic materia, id nobis corpus est."—Ep. lxxv. 24); which again is a Latin version of the old Stoical doctrine, εἰς ἅπαν τοῦ κόσμου μέρος διήκει ὁ νοῦς, καθάπερ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχή.

So far as the testimony for the universality of what ordinary people call 'evil' goes, there is nothing better than the writings of the Stoics themselves. They might serve as a storehouse for the epigrams of the ultra-pessimists. Heracleitus (circa 500 B.C.) says just as hard things about ordinary humanity as his disciples centuries later; and there really seems no need to seek for the causes of this dark view of life in the circumstances of the time of Alexander's successors or of the early Emperors of Rome. To the man with an ethical ideal, the world, including himself, will always seem full of evil.

Note 14 (p. 47).

I use the well-known phrase, but decline responsibility for the libel upon Epicurus, whose doctrines were far less compatible with existence in a sty than those of the Cynics. If it were steadily borne in mind that the conception of the 'flesh' as the source of evil, and the great saying 'Initium est salutis notitia peccati,' are the

property of Epicurus, fewer illusions about Epicureanism would pass muster for accepted truth.

Note 15 (p. 48).

The Stoics said that man was a ζῷον λογικὸν πολιτικὸν φιλάλληλον, or a rational, a political, and an altruistic or philanthropic animal. In their view, his higher nature tended to develop in these three directions, as a plant tends to grow up into its typical form. Since, without the introduction of any consideration of pleasure or pain, whatever thwarted the realisation of its type by the plant might be said to be bad, and whatever helped it good; so virtue, in the Stoical sense, as the conduct which tended to the attainment of the rational, political, and philanthropic ideal, was good in itself, and irrespectively of its emotional concomitants.

Man is an "animal sociale communi bono genitum." The safety of society depends upon practical recognition of the fact. "Salva autem esse societas nisi custodia et amore partium non possit," says Seneca (*De. Ira*, ii. 31.)

Note 16 (p. 48).

The importance of the physical doctrine of the Stoics lies in its clear recognition of the universality of the law of causation, with its corollary, the order of nature: the exact form of that order is an altogether secondary consideration.

Many ingenious persons now appear to consider that the incompatibility of pantheism, of materialism, and of any doubt about the immortality of the soul, with religion and morality, is to be held as an axiomatic truth. I confess that I have a certain difficulty in accepting this dogma. For the Stoics were notoriously materialists and pantheists of the most extreme character; and while no strict Stoic believed in the eternal duration of the individual soul, some even denied its persistence after death. Yet it is equally certain that of all gentile philosophies, Stoicism exhibits the highest ethical development, is animated by the most religious spirit, and has exerted the profoundest influence upon the moral and religious development not merely of the best men among the Romans, but among the moderns down to our own day.

Seneca was claimed as a Christian and placed among the saints by the fathers of the early Christian Church; and the genuineness of a correspondence between him and the apostle Paul has been hotly maintained in our own time, by orthodox writers. That the letters, as we

possess them, are worthless forgeries is obvious ; and writers as wide apart as Baur and Lightfoot agree that the whole story is devoid of foundation.

The dissertation of the late Bishop of Durham (*Epistle to the Philippians*) is particularly worthy of study, apart from this question, on account of the evidence which it supplies of the numerous similarities of thought between Seneca and the writer of the Pauline epistles. When it is remembered that the writer of the Acts puts a quotation from Aratus, or Cleanthes, into the mouth of the apostle ; and that Tarsus was a great seat of philosophical and especially stoical learning (Chrysippus himself was a native of the adjacent town of Sôli), there is no difficulty in understanding the origin of these resemblances. See, on this subject, Sir Alexander Grant's dissertation in his edition of *The Ethics of Aristotle* (where there is an interesting reference to the stoical character of Bishop Butler's ethics), the concluding pages of Dr. Weygoldt's instructive little work *Die Philosophie der Stoa*, and Aubertin's *Sénèque et Saint Paul*.

It is surprising that a writer of Dr. Lightfoot's stamp should speak of Stoicism as a philosophy of 'despair.' Surely, rather, it was a philosophy of men who, having cast off all illusions, and the childishness of despair among them, were minded to endure in patience whatever conditions the cosmic process might create, so long as those conditions were compatible with the progress towards virtue, which alone, for them, conferred a worthy object on existence. There is no note of despair in the stoical declaration that the perfected 'wise man' is the equal of Zeus in everything but the duration of his existence. And, in my judgment, there is as little pride about it, often as it serves for the text of discourses on stoical arrogance. Grant the stoical postulate that there is no good except virtue ; grant that the perfected wise man is altogether virtuous, in consequence of being guided in all things by the reason, which is an effluence of Zeus, and there seems no escape from the stoical conclusion.

Note 17 (p. 48).

Our "Apathy" carries such a different set of connotations from its Greek original that I have ventured on using the latter as a technical term.

Note 18 (p. 49).

Many of the stoical philosophers recommended their disciples to take an active share in public affairs ; and in the Roman world, for several centuries, the best public men were strongly in-

clined to Stoicism. Nevertheless, the logical tendency of Stoicism seems to me to be fulfilled only in such men as Diogenes and Epictetus.

Note 19 (p. 50).

"Criticism on the Origin of Species," 1864. *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. p. 91. [1894.]

Note 20 (p. 50).

Of course, strictly speaking, social life, and the ethical process in virtue of which it advances towards perfection, are part and parcel of the general process of evolution, just as the gregarious habit of innumerable plants and animals, which has been of immense advantage to them, is so. A hive of bees is an organic polity, a society in which the part played by each member is determined by organic necessities. Queens, workers, and drones are, so to speak, castes, divided from one another by marked physical barriers. Among birds and mammals, societies are formed, of which the bond in many cases seems to be purely psychological ; that is to say, it appears to depend upon the liking of the individuals for one another's company. The tendency of individuals to over self-assertion is kept down by fighting. Even in these rudimentary forms of society, love and fear come into play, and enforce a greater or less renunciation of self-will. To this extent the general cosmic process begins to be checked by a rudimentary ethical process, which is, strictly speaking, part of the former, just as the 'governor' in a steam-engine is part of the mechanism of the engine.

Note 21 (p. 51).

See "Government : Anarchy or Regimentation," the concluding essay in this volume. It is this form of political philosophy to which I conceive the epithet of 'reasoned savagery' to be strictly applicable. [1894.]

Note 22 (p. 51).

"L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau, suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt ; et l'avantage

que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien."
—*Pensées de Pascal.*

Note 23 (p. 52).

The use of the word "Nature" here may be criticised. Yet the manifestation of the natural tendencies of men is so profoundly modified by training that it is hardly too strong. Consider the suppression of the sexual instinct between near relations.

Note 24 (p. 52).

A great proportion of poetry is addressed by the young to the young ; only the great masters of the art are capable of divining, or think it worth while to enter into, the feelings of retrospective age. The two great poets whom we have so lately lost, Tennyson and Browning, have done this, each in his own inimitable way ; the one in the *Ulysses*, from which I have borrowed ; the other in that wonderful fragment 'Childe Roland to the dark Tower came.'

SCIENCE AND MORALS

[1886]

IN spite of long and perhaps, not, unjustifiable hesitation, I begin to think that there must be something in telepathy. For evidence, which I may not disregard, is furnished by the last number of the "Fortnightly Review" that among the hitherto undiscovered endowments of the human species, there may be a power even more wonderful than the mystic faculty by which the esoterically Buddhistic sage "upon the farthest mountain in Cathay" reads the inmost thoughts of a dweller within the homely circuit of the London postal district. Great indeed is the insight of such a seer; but how much greater is his who combines the feat of reading, not merely the thoughts of which the thinker is aware, but those of which he knows nothing; who sees him unconsciously drawing the conclusions which he repudiates and supporting the doctrines which he detests. To reflect upon the confusion which the working of such a power as this may introduce into one's ideas of personality and responsibility is perilous—madness lies that way. But truth is truth, and I am almost fain to believe in this magical visibility of the non-existent when the only alternative is the supposition that the writer of the article on "Materialism and Morality" in vol. xl. (1886) of the "Fortnightly Review," in spite of his manifest ability and honesty, has pledged himself, so far as I am concerned, to what, if I may trust my own knowledge of my own thoughts, must be called a multitude of errors of the first magnitude.

I so much admire Mr. Lilly's outspokenness, I am so completely satisfied

with the uprightness of his intentions, that it is repugnant to me to quarrel with anything he may say, and I sympathise so warmly with his manly scorn of the vileness of much that passes under the name of literature in these times, that I would willingly be silent under his by no means unkindly exposition of his theory of my own tenets, if I thought that such personal abnegation would serve the interest of the cause we both have at heart. But I cannot think so. My creed may be an ill-favoured thing, but it is mine own, as Touchstone says of his lady-love; and I have so high an opinion of the solid virtues of the object of my affections that I cannot calmly see her personated by a wench who is much uglier and has no virtue worth speaking of. I hope I should be ready to stand by a falling cause if I had ever adopted it; but suffering for a falling cause, which one has done one's best to bring to the ground, is a kind of martyrdom for which I have no taste. In my opinion, the philosophical theory which Mr. Lilly attributes to me—but which I have over and over again disclaimed—is untenable and destined to extinction; and I not unreasonably demur to being counted among its defenders.

After the manner of a mediæval disputant, Mr. Lilly posts up three theses, which, as he conceives, embody the chief heresies propagated by the late Professor Clifford, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and myself. He says that we agree "(1) in putting aside, as unverifiable, everything which the senses cannot verify; (2) everything beyond the bounds of physical science; (3) everything which

cannot be brought into a laboratory and dealt with chemically" (p. 578).

My lamented young friend Clifford, sweetest of natures though keenest of disputants, is out of reach of our little controversies, but his works speak for him, and those who run may read a refutation of Mr. Lilly's assertions in them. Mr. Herbert Spencer, hitherto, has shown no lack either of ability or of inclination to speak for himself; and it would be a superfluity, not to say an impertinence, on my part, to take up the cudgels for him. But, for myself, if my knowledge of my own consciousness may be assumed to be adequate (and I make not the least pretension to acquaintance with what goes on in my "Unbewusstsein"), I may be permitted to observe that the first proposition appears to me to be not true; that the second is in the same case; and that, if there be gradations in untruthness, the third is so monstrously untrue that it hovers on the verge of absurdity, even if it does not actually flounder in that logical limbo. Thus, to all three theses, I reply in appropriate fashion, *Nego*—I say No; and I proceed to state the grounds of that negation, which the proprieties do not permit me to make quite so emphatic as I could desire.

Let me begin with the first assertion, that I "put aside, as unverifiable, everything which the senses cannot verify." Can such a statement as this be seriously made in respect of any human being? But I am not appointed apologist for mankind in general; and confining my observations to myself, I beg leave to point out that, at this present moment, I entertain an unshakable conviction that Mr. Lilly is the victim of a patent and enormous misunderstanding, and that I have not the slightest intention of putting that conviction aside because I cannot "verify" it either by touch, or taste, or smell, or hearing, or sight, which (in the absence of any trace of telepathic faculty) make up the totality of my senses.

Again, I may venture to admire the clear and vigorous English in which Mr. Lilly embodies his views; but the source of that admiration does not lie in anything which my five senses enable me to discover in the pages of his article, and of which an orang-outang might be just as acutely sensible. No, it lies in an appreciation of literary form and logical structure by æsthetic and intellectual faculties which are not senses, and which are not unfrequently sadly wanting where the senses are in full vigour. My poor relation may beat me in the matter of sensation; but I am quite confident that, when style and syllogisms are to be dealt with, he is nowhere.

If there is anything in the world which I do firmly believe in, it is the universal validity of the law of causation; but that universality cannot be proved by any amount of experience, let alone that which comes to us through the senses. And when an effort of volition changes the current of my thoughts, or when an idea calls up another associated idea, I have not the slightest doubt that the process to which the first of the phenomena, in each case, is due stands in the relation of cause to the second. Yet the attempt to verify this belief by sensation would be sheer lunacy. Now I am quite sure that Mr. Lilly does not doubt my sanity; and the only alternative seems to be the admission that his first proposition is erroneous.

The second thesis charges me with putting aside "as unverifiable" "everything beyond the bounds of physical science." Again I say, No. Nobody, I imagine, will credit me with a desire to limit the empire of physical science, but I really feel bound to confess that a great many very familiar and, at the same time, extremely important phenomena lie quite beyond its legitimate limits. I cannot conceive, for example, how the phenomena of consciousness, as such and apart from the physical process by which they are called into existence, are to be

brought within the bounds of physical science. Take the simplest possible example, the feeling of redness. Physical science tells us that it commonly arises as a consequence of molecular changes propagated from the eye to a certain part of the substance of the brain, when vibrations of the luminiferous ether of a certain character fall upon the retina. Let us suppose the process of physical analysis pushed so far that one could view the last link of this chain of molecules, watch their movements as if they were billiard balls, weigh them, measure them, and know all that is physically knowable about them. Well, even in that case, we should be just as far from being able to include the resulting phenomenon of consciousness, the feeling of redness, within the bounds of physical science, as we are at present. It would remain as unlike the phenomena we know under the names of matter and motion as it is now. If there is any plain truth upon which I have made it my business to insist over and over again it is this—and whether it is a truth or not, my insistence upon it leaves not a shadow of justification for Mr. Lilly's assertion.

But I ask in this case also, how is it conceivable that any man, in possession of all his natural faculties, should hold such an opinion? I do not suppose that I am exceptionally endowed because I have all my life enjoyed a keen perception of the beauty offered us by nature and by art. Now physical science may and probably will, some day, enable our posterity to set forth the exact physical concomitants and conditions of the strange rapture of beauty. But if ever that day arrives, the rapture will remain, just as it is now, outside and beyond the physical world; and, even in the mental world, something superadded to mere sensation. I do not wish to crow unduly over my humble cousin the orang, but in the æsthetic province, as in that of the intellect, I am afraid he is nowhere. I doubt not he would detect a fruit amidst

a wilderness of leaves where I could see nothing; but I am tolerably confident that he has never been awestruck, as I have been, by the dim religious gloom as of a temple devoted to the earthgods of the tropical forests which he inhabits. Yet I doubt not that our poor long-armed and short-legged friend, as he sits meditatively munching his durian fruit, has something behind that sad Socratic face of his which is utterly "beyond the bounds of physical science." Physical science may know all about his clutching the fruit and munching it and digesting it, and how the physical titillation of his palate is transmitted to some microscopic cells of the grey matter of his brain. But the feelings of sweetness and of satisfaction which, for a moment, hang out their signal lights in his melancholy eyes, are as utterly outside the bounds of physics as is the "fine frenzy" of a human rhapsodist.

Does Mr. Lilly really believe that, putting me aside, there is any man with the feeling of music in him who disbelieves in the reality of the delight which he derives from it, because that delight lies outside the bounds of physical science, not less than outside the region of the mere sense of hearing? But, it may be, that he includes music, painting, and sculpture under the head of physical science, and in that case I can only regret I am unable to follow him in his ennoblement of my favourite pursuits.

The third thesis runs that I put aside "as unverifiable" "everything which cannot be brought into a laboratory and dealt with chemically"; and, once more, I say No. This wondrous allegation is no novelty; it has not unfrequently reached me from that region where gentle (or ungentle) dulness so often holds unchecked sway—the pulpit. But I marvel to find that a writer of Mr. Lilly's intelligence and good faith is willing to father such a wastrel. If I am to deal with the thing seriously, I find myself met by one of the two horns of a dilemma. Either some meaning,

as unknown to usage as to the dictionaries, attaches to "laboratory" and "chemical," or the proposition is (what am I to say in my sore need for a gentle and yet appropriate word?)—well—unhistorical.

Does Mr. Lilly suppose that I put aside "as unverifiable" all the truths of mathematics, of philology, of history? And if I do not, will he have the great goodness to say how the binomial theorem is to be dealt with "chemically," even in the best-appointed "laboratory"; or where the balances and crucibles are kept by which the various theories of the nature of the Basque language may be tested; or what reagents will extract the truth from any given History of Rome, and leave the errors behind as a residual calx?

I really cannot answer these questions, and unless Mr. Lilly can, I think he would do well hereafter to think more than twice before attributing such preposterous notions to his fellow-men, who, after all, as a learned counsel said, are vertebrated animals.

The whole thing perplexes me much; and I am sure there must be an explanation which will leave Mr. Lilly's reputation for common sense and fair dealing untouched. Can it be—I put this forward quite tentatively—that Mr. Lilly is the victim of a confusion, common enough among thoughtless people, and into which he has fallen unawares? Obviously, it is one thing to say that the logical methods of physical science are of universal applicability, and quite another to affirm that all subjects of thought lie within the province of physical science. I have often declared my conviction that there is only one method by which intellectual truth can be reached, whether the subject-matter of investigation belongs to the world of physics or to the world of consciousness; and one of the arguments in favour of the use of physical science as an instrument of education which I have oftenest used is that, in my opinion it exercises young minds in the

appreciation of inductive evidence better than any other study. But while I repeat my conviction that the physical sciences probably furnish the best and most easily appreciable illustrations of the one and indivisible mode of ascertaining truth by the use of reason, I beg leave to add that I have never thought of suggesting that other branches of knowledge may not afford the same discipline; and assuredly I have never given the slightest ground for the attribution to me of the ridiculous contention that there is nothing true outside the bounds of physical science. Doubtless people who wanted to say something damaging, without too nice a regard to its truth or falsehood, have often enough misrepresented my plain meaning. But Mr. Lilly is not one of these folks at whom one looks and passes by, and I can but sorrowfully wonder at finding him in such company.

So much for the three theses which Mr. Lilly has nailed on to the page of this Review. I think I have shown that the first is inaccurate, that the second is inaccurate, and that the third is inaccurate; and that these three inaccuracies constitute one prodigious, though I doubt not unintentional, misrepresentation. If Mr. Lilly and I were dialectic gladiators, fighting in the arena of the "Fortnightly," under the eye of an editorial lanista, for the delectation of the public, my best tactics would now be to leave the field of battle. For the question whether I do, or do not, hold certain opinions is a matter of fact, with regard to which my evidence is likely to be regarded as conclusive—at least until such time as the telepathy of the unconscious is more generally recognised.

However, some other assertions are made by Mr. Lilly which more or less involve matters of opinion whereof the rights and wrongs are less easily settled, but in respect of which he seems to me to err quite as seriously as about the topics we have been hitherto discussing. And the importance of these subjects

leads me to venture upon saying something about them, even though I am thereby compelled to leave the safe ground of personal knowledge.

Before launching the three torpedoes which have so sadly exploded on board his own ship, Mr. Lilly says that with whatever "rhetorical ornaments I may gild my teaching," it is "Materialism." Let me observe, in passing, that rhetorical ornament is not in my way, and that gilding refined gold would, to my mind, be less objectionable than varnishing the fair face of truth with that pestilent cosmetic, rhetoric. If I believed that I had any claim to the title of "Materialist," as that term is understood in the language of philosophy and not in that of abuse, I should not attempt to hide it by any sort of gilding. I have not found reason to care much for hard names in the course of the last thirty years, and I am too old to develop a new sensitiveness. But, to repeat what I have more than once taken pains to say in the most unadorned of plain language, I repudiate, as philosophical error, the doctrine of Materialism as I understand it, just as I repudiate the doctrine of Spiritualism as Mr. Lilly presents it, and my reason for thus doing is, in both cases, the same; namely, that, whatever their differences, Materialists and Spiritualists agree in making very positive assertions about matters of which I am certain I know nothing, and about which I believe they are, in truth, just as ignorant. And further, that even when their assertions are confined to topics which lie within the range of my faculties, they often appear to me to be in the wrong. And there is yet another reason for objecting to be identified with either of these sects; and that is that each is extremely fond of attributing to the other, by way of reproach, conclusions which are the property of neither, though they infallibly flow from the logical development of the first principles of both. Surely a prudent man is not to be reproached because he keeps clear of the squabbles of these

philosophical Bianchi and Neri, by refusing to have anything to do with either?

I understand the main tenet of Materialism to be that there is nothing in the universe but matter and force; and that all the phenomena of nature are explicable by deduction from the properties assignable to these two primitive factors. That great champion of Materialism whom Mr. Lilly appears to consider to be an authority in physical science, Dr. Büchner, embodies this article of faith on his title-page. *Kraft und Stoff*—force and matter—are paraded as the Alpha and Omega of existence. This I apprehend is the fundamental article of the faith materialistic; and whosoever does not hold it is condemned by the more zealous of the persuasion (as I have some reason to know) to the Inferno appointed for fools or hypocrites. But all this I heartily disbelieve; and at the risk of being charged with wearisome repetition of an old story, I will briefly give my reasons for persisting in my infidelity. In the first place, as I have already hinted, it seems to me pretty plain that there is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which, in the hardness of my heart or head, I cannot see to be matter, or force, or any conceivable modification of either, however intimately the manifestations of the phenomena of consciousness may be connected with the phenomena known as matter and force. In the second place, the arguments used by Descartes and Berkeley to show that our certain knowledge does not extend beyond our states of consciousness, appear to me to be as irrefragable now as they did when I first became acquainted with them some half-century ago. All the materialistic writers I know of who have tried to bite that file have simply broken their teeth. But, if this is true, our one certainty is the existence of the mental world, and that of *Kraft und Stoff* falls into the rank of, at best, a highly probable hypothesis.

Thirdly, when I was a mere boy, with a perverse tendency to think when I ought to have been playing, my mind was greatly exercised by this formidable problem, What would become of things if they lost their qualities? As the qualities had no objective existence, and the thing without qualities was nothing, the solid world seemed whittled away—to my great horror. As I grew older, and learned to use the terms matter and force, the boyish problem was revived, *mutato nomine*. On the one hand, the notion of matter without force seemed to resolve the world into a set of geometrical ghosts, too dead even to jabber. On the other hand, Boscovich's hypothesis, by which matter was resolved into centres of force, was very attractive. But when one tried to think it out, what in the world became of force considered as an objective entity? Force, even the most materialistic of philosophers will agree with the most idealistic, is nothing but a name for the cause of motion. And if, with Boscovich, I resolved things into centres of force, then matter vanished altogether and left immaterial entities in its place. One might as well frankly accept Idealism and have done with it.

I must make a confession, even if it be humiliating. I have never been able to form the slightest conception of those "forces" which the Materialists talk about, as if they had samples of them many years in bottle. They tell me that matter consists of atoms, which are separated by mere space devoid of contents; and that, through this void, radiate the attractive and repulsive forces whereby the atoms affect one another. If anybody can clearly conceive the nature of these things which not only exist in nothingness, but pull and push there with great vigour, I envy him for the possession of an intellect of larger grasp, not only than mine, but than that of Leibnitz or of Newton.¹ To me the "chimæra, bom-

¹ See the famous *Collection of Papers*, published by Clarke in 1717. Leibnitz says: "'Tis also

binans in vacuo quia comedit secundas intentiones" of the schoolmen is a familiar and domestic creature compared with such "forces." Besides, by the hypothesis, the forces are not matter; and thus all that is of any particular consequence in the world turns out to be not matter on the Materialist's own showing. Let it not be supposed that I am casting a doubt upon the propriety of the employment of the terms "atom" and "force," as they stand among the working hypotheses of physical science. As formulæ which can be applied, with perfect precision and great convenience, in the interpretation of nature, their value is incalculable; but, as real entities, having an objective existence, an indivisible particle which nevertheless occupies space is surely inconceivable; and with respect to the operation of that atom, where it is not, by the aid of a "force" resident in nothingness, I am as little able to imagine it as I fancy any one else is.

Unless and until anybody will resolve all these doubts and difficulties for me, I think I have a right to hold aloof from Materialism. As to Spiritualism, it lands me in even greater difficulties when I want to get change for its notes-of-hand in the solid coin of reality. For the assumed substantial entity, spirit, which is supposed to underlie the phenomena of consciousness, as matter underlies those of physical nature, leaves not even a geometrical ghost when these phenomena are abstracted. And, even if we suppose the existence of such an entity apart from qualities—that is to say, a bare existence—for mind, how does anybody know that it differs from that other entity, apart from qualities, which is the supposed sub-

a supernatural thing that bodies should *attract* one another at a distance without any intermediate means." And Clarke, on behalf of Newton, caps this as follows: "That one body should attract another without any intermediate means is, indeed, not a *miracle*, but a contradiction; for 'tis supposing something to act where it is not."

stratum of matter? Spiritualism is, after all, little better than Materialism turned upside down. And if I try to think of the "spirit" which a man, by this hypothesis, carries about under his hat, as something devoid of relation to space, and as something indivisible, even in thought, while it is, at the same time, supposed to be in that place and to be possessed of half a dozen different faculties, I confess I get quite lost.

As I have said elsewhere, if I were forced to choose between Materialism and Idealism, I should elect for the latter; and I certainly would have nothing to do with the effete mythology of Spiritualism. But I am not aware that I am under any compulsion to choose either the one or the other. I have always entertained a strong suspicion that the sage who maintained that man is the measure of the universe was sadly in the wrong; and age and experience have not weakened that conviction. In following these lines of speculation I am reminded of the quarter-deck walks of my youth. In taking that form of exercise you may perambulate through all points of the compass with perfect safety, so long as you keep within certain limits: forget those limits, in your ardour, and mere smothering and spluttering, if not worse, await you. I stick by the deck and throw a lifebuoy now and then to the struggling folk who have gone overboard; and all I get for my humanity is the abuse of all whenever they leave off abusing one another.

Tolerably early in life I discovered that one of the unpardonable sins, in the eyes of most people, is for a man to presume to go about unlabelled. The world regards such a person as the police do an unmuzzled dog, not under proper control. I could find no label that would suit me, so, in my desire to range myself and be respectable, I invented one; and, as the chief thing I was sure of was that I did not know a great many things that the —ists and the —ites about me professed to be familiar with, I called

myself an Agnostic. Surely no denomination could be more modest or more appropriate; and I cannot imagine why I should be every now and then haled out of my refuge and declared sometimes to be a Materialist, sometimes an Atheist, sometimes a Positivist; and sometimes, alas and alack, a cowardly or reactionary Obscurantist.

I trust that I have, at last, made my case clear, and that henceforth I shall be allowed to rest in peace—at least, after a further explanation or two, which Mr. Lilly proves to me may be necessary. It has been seen that my excellent critic has original ideas respecting the meaning of the words "laboratory" and "chemical"; and, as it appears to me, his definition of "Materialist" is quite as much peculiar to himself. For, unless I misunderstand him, and I have taken pains not to do so, he puts me down as a Materialist (over and above the grounds which I have shown to have no foundation); firstly, because I have said that consciousness is a function of the brain; and, secondly, because I hold by determinism. With respect to the first point, I am not aware that there is any one who doubts that, in the proper physiological sense of the word function, consciousness, in certain forms at any rate, is a cerebral function. In physiology we call function that effect, or series of effects, which results from the activity of an organ. Thus, it is the function of muscle to give rise to motion; and the muscle gives rise to motion when the nerve which supplies it is stimulated. If one of the nerve-bundles in a man's arm is laid bare and a stimulus is applied to certain of the nervous filaments, the result will be production of motion in that arm. If others are stimulated, the result will be the production of the state of consciousness called pain. Now, if I trace these last nerve-filaments, I find them to be ultimately connected with part of the substance of the brain, just as the others turn out to be connected with muscular substance. If the pro-

duction of motion in the one case is properly said to be the function of the muscular substance, why is the production of a state of consciousness in the other case not to be called a function of the cerebral substance? Once upon a time, it is true, it was supposed that a certain "animal spirit" resided in muscle and was the real active agent. But we have done with that wholly superfluous fiction so far as the muscular organs are concerned. Why are we to retain a corresponding fiction for the nervous organs?

If it is replied that no physiologist, however spiritual his leanings, dreams of supposing that simple sensations require a "spirit" for their production, then I must point out that we are all agreed that consciousness is a function of matter, and that particular tenet must be given up as a mark of Materialism. Any further argument will turn upon the question, not whether consciousness is a function of the brain, but whether all forms of consciousness are so. Again, I hold it would be quite correct to say that material changes are the causes of psychical phenomena (and, as a consequence, that the organs in which these changes take place have the production of such phenomena for their function), even if the spiritualistic hypothesis had any foundation. For nobody hesitates to say that an event A is the cause of an event Z, even if there are as many intermediate terms, known and unknown, in the chain of causation as there are letters between A and Z. The man who pulls the trigger of a loaded pistol placed close to another's head certainly is the cause of that other's death, though, in strictness, he "causes" nothing but the movement of the finger upon the trigger. And, in like manner, the molecular change which is brought about in a certain portion of the cerebral substance by the stimulation of a remote part of the body would be properly said to be the cause of the consequent feeling, whatever unknown terms were interposed between the physical

agent and the actual psychical product. Therefore, unless Materialism has the monopoly of the right use of language, I see nothing materialistic in the phraseology which I have employed.

The only remaining justification which Mr. Lilly offers for dubbing me a Materialist, *malgré moi*, arises out of a passage which he quotes, in which I say that the progress of science means the extension of the province of what we call matter and force, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity. I hold that opinion now, if anything, more firmly than I did when I gave utterance to it a score of years ago, for it has been justified by subsequent events. But what that opinion has to do with Materialism I fail to discover. In my judgment, it is consistent with the most thorough-going Idealism, and the grounds of that judgment are really very plain and simple.

The growth of science, not merely of physical science, but of all science, means the demonstration of order and natural causation among phenomena which had not previously been brought under those conceptions. Nobody who is acquainted with the progress of scientific thinking in every department of human knowledge, in the course of the last two centuries, will be disposed to deny that immense provinces have been added to the realm of science; or to doubt that the next two centuries will be witnesses of a vastly greater annexation. More particularly in the region of the physiology of the nervous system is it justifiable to conclude from the progress that has been made in analysing the relations between material and psychical phenomena, that vast further advances will be made; and that, sooner or later, all the so-called spontaneous operations of the mind will have, not only their relations to one another, but their relations to physical phenomena, connected in natural series of causes and effects, strictly defined. In other words, while, at present,

we know only the nearer moiety of the chain of causes and effects, by which the phenomena we call material give rise to those which we call mental; hereafter, we shall get to the further end of the series.

In my innocence, I have been in the habit of supposing that this is merely a statement of facts, and that the good Bishop Berkeley, if he were alive, would find such facts fit into his system without the least difficulty. That Mr. Lilly should play into the hands of his foes, by declaring that unmistakable facts make for them, is an exemplification of ways that are dark, quite unintelligible to me. Surely Mr. Lilly does not hold that the disbelief in spontaneity—which term, if it has any meaning at all, means uncaused action—is a mark of the beast Materialism? If so, he must be prepared to tackle many of the Cartesians (if not Descartes himself), Spinoza and Leibnitz among the philosophers, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Calvin and his followers among theologians, as Materialists—and that surely is a sufficient *reductio ad absurdum* of such a classification.

The truth is, that in his zeal to paint "Materialism," in large letters, on everything he dislikes, Mr. Lilly forgets a very important fact, which, however, must be patent to every one who has paid attention to the history of human thought; and that fact is, that every one of the speculative difficulties which beset Kant's three problems, the existence of a Deity, the freedom of the will, and immortality, existed ages before anything that can be called physical science, and would continue to exist if modern physical science were swept away. All that physical science has done has been to make, as it were, visible and tangible, some difficulties that formerly were more hard of apprehension. Moreover, these difficulties exist just as much on the hypothesis of Idealism as on that of Materialism.

The student of nature, who starts from the axiom of the universality of the law of causation, cannot refuse to admit

an eternal existence; if he admits the conservation of energy, he cannot deny the possibility of an eternal energy; if he admits the existence of immaterial phenomena in the form of consciousness, he must admit the possibility, at any rate, of an eternal series of such phenomena; and, if his studies have not been barren of the best fruit of the investigation of nature, he will have enough sense to see that when Spinoza says, "Per Deum intelligo ens absolute infinitum, hoc est substantiam constantem infinitis attributis," the God so conceived is one that only a very great fool would deny, even in his heart. Physical science is as little Atheistic as it is Materialistic.

So with respect to immortality. As physical science states this problem, it seems to stand thus: "Is there any means of knowing whether the series of states of consciousness, which has been casually associated for threescore years and ten with the arrangement and movements of innumerable millions of successively different material molecules, can be continued, in like association, with some substance which has not the properties of matter and force?" As Kant said, on a like occasion, if anybody can answer that question, he is just the man I want to see. If he says that consciousness cannot exist, except in relation of cause and effect with certain organic molecules, I must ask how he knows that; and if he says it can, I must put the same question. And I am afraid that, like jesting Pilate, I shall not think it worth while (having but little time before me) to wait for an answer.

Lastly, with respect to the old riddle of the freedom of the will. In the only sense in which the word freedom is intelligible to me—that is to say, the absence of any restraint upon doing what one likes within certain limits—physical science certainly gives no more ground for doubting it than the common sense of mankind does. And if physical science, in strengthening our belief in the universality of causation and abolishing

chance as an absurdity, leads to the conclusions of determinism, it does no more than follow the track of consistent and logical thinkers in philosophy and in theology, before it existed or was thought of. Whoever accepts the universality of the law of causation as a dogma of philosophy, denies the existence of uncaused phenomena. And the essence of that which is improperly called the freewill doctrine is that occasionally, at any rate, human volition is self-caused, that is to say, not caused at all; for to cause oneself one must have anteceded oneself—which is, to say the least of it, difficult to imagine.

Whoever accepts the existence of an omniscient Deity as a dogma of theology, affirms that the order of things is fixed from eternity to eternity; for the foreknowledge of an occurrence means that the occurrence will certainly happen; and the certainty of an event happening is what is meant by its being fixed or fated.¹

¹ I may cite, in support of this obvious conclusion of sound reasoning, two authorities who will certainly not be regarded lightly by Mr. Lilly. These are Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The former declares that "Fate" is only an ill-chosen name for Providence.

"Prorsus divina providentia regna constituuntur humana. Quæ si propterea quisquam fato tribuit, quia ipsam Dei voluntatem vel potestatem fati nomine appellat, *sententiam teneat, linguam corrigat*" (Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, V. c. i.).

The other great doctor of the Catholic Church, "Divus Thomas," as Suarez calls him whose marvellous grasp and subtlety of intellect seem to me to be almost without a parallel, puts the whole case into a nutshell, when he says that the ground for doing a thing in the mind of the doer is as it were the pre-existence of the thing done:

"Ratio autem alicujus fiendi in mente actoris existens est quædam præ-existentia rei fiendæ in eo" (*Summa*, Qu. xxiii. Art. i.).

If this is not enough, I may further ask what "Materialist" has ever given a better statement of the case for determinism, on theistic grounds, than is to be found in the following passage of the *Summa*, Qu. xiv. Art. xiii.

"Omnia quæ sunt in tempore, sunt Deo ab æterno præsentia, non solum ea ex ratione quæ habet rationes rerum apud se presentes, ut quidam dicunt, sed quia ejus intuitus fertur ab æterno supra omnia, prout sunt in sua præsentialitate.

Whoever asserts the existence of an omnipotent Deity, that he made and sustains all things, and is the *causa causarum*, cannot, without a contradiction in terms, assert that there is any cause independent of him; and it is a mere subterfuge to assert that the cause of all things can "permit" one of these things to be an independent cause.

Whoever asserts the combination of omniscience and omnipotence as attributes of the Deity, does implicitly assert predestination. For he who knowingly makes a thing and places it in circumstances the operation of which on that thing he is perfectly acquainted with, does predestine that thing to whatever fate may befall it.

Thus, to come, at last, to the really important part of all this discussion, if the belief in a God is essential to morality, physical science offers no obstacle thereto; if the belief in immortality is essential to morality, physical science has no more to say against the probability of that doctrine than the most ordinary experience has, and it effectually closes the mouths of those who pretend to refute it by objections deduced from merely physical data. Finally, if belief in the uncausedness of volition is essential to morality, the student of physical science has no more to say against that absurdity than the logical philosopher or theologian. Physical science, I repeat, did not invent determinism, and the deterministic doctrine would stand on just as firm a foundation as it does if there were no physical science. Let any one who doubts this read Jonathan Edwards, whose demonstrations are derived wholly from philosophy and theology.

Unde manifestum est quod contingentia infallibiliter a Deo cognoscuntur, in quantum subduntur divino conspectui secundum suam præsentialitatem; et tamen sunt futura contingentia, suis causis proximis comparata."

[As I have not said that Thomas Aquinas is professedly a determinist, I do not see the bearing of citations from him which may be more or less inconsistent with the foregoing.]

Thus, when Mr. Lilly, like another Solomon Eagle, goes about proclaiming "Woe to this wicked city," and denouncing physical science as the evil genius of modern days—mother of materialism, and fatalism, and all sorts of other condemnableisms—I venture to beg him to lay the blame on the right shoulder; or, at least, to put in the dock, along with Science, those sinful sisters of hers Philosophy and Theology, who, being so much older, should have known better than the poor Cinderella of the schools and universities over which they have so long dominated. No doubt modern society is diseased enough; but then it does not differ from older civilisations in that respect. Societies of men are fermenting masses, and, as beer has what the Germans call "Oberhefe" and "Unterhefe," so every society that has existed has had its scum at the top and its dregs at the bottom; but I doubt if any of the "ages of faith" had less scum or less dregs, or even showed a proportionally greater quantity of sound wholesome stuff in the vat. I think it would puzzle Mr. Lilly, or any one else, to adduce convincing evidence that, at any period of the world's history, there was a more widespread sense of social duty, or a greater sense of justice, or of the obligation of mutual help, than in this England of ours. Ah! but, says Mr. Lilly, these are all products of our Christian inheritance; when Christian dogmas vanish virtue will disappear too, and the ancestral ape and tiger will have full play. But there are a good many people who think it obvious that Christianity also inherited a good deal from Paganism and from Judaism; and that, if the Stoics and the Jews revoked their bequest, the moral property of Christianity would realise very little. And, if morality has survived the stripping off of several sets of clothes which have been found to fit badly, why should

it not be able to get on very well in the light and handy garments which Science is ready to provide?

But this by the way. If the diseases of society consist in the weakness of its faith in the existence of the God of the theologians, in a future state, and in uncaused volitions, the indication, as the doctors say, is to suppress Theology and Philosophy, whose bickerings about things of which they know nothing have been the prime cause and continual sustenance of that evil scepticism which is the Nemesis of meddling with the unknowable.

Cinderella is modestly conscious of her ignorance of these high matters. She lights the fire, sweeps the house, and provides the dinner; and is rewarded by being told that she is a base creature, devoted to low and material interests. But in her garret she has fairy visions out of the ken of the pair of shrews who are quarrelling down stairs. She sees the order which pervades the seeming disorder of the world; the great drama of evolution, with its full share of pity and terror, but also with abundant goodness and beauty, unrolls itself before her eyes; and she learns, in her heart of hearts, the lesson, that the foundation of morality is to have done, once and for all, with lying; to give up pretending to believe that for which there is no evidence, and repeating unintelligible propositions about things beyond the possibilities of knowledge.

She knows that the safety of morality lies neither in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, nor this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of nature which sends social disorganisation upon the track of immorality, as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses. And of that firm and lively faith it is her high mission to be the priestess.

ON THE NATURAL INEQUALITY OF MEN

[1890]

THE political speculations set forth in Rousseau's "Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes," and in the more noted essay, "Du Contrat Social," which were published, the former in 1754 and the latter eight years later, are, for the most part, if not wholly, founded upon conceptions with the origination of which he had nothing to do. The political, like the religious, revolutionary intellectual movement of the eighteenth century in France came from England. Hobbes, primarily, and Locke, secondarily (Rousseau was acquainted with the writings of both), supplied every notion of fundamental importance which is to be found in the works which I have mentioned. But the skill of a master of the literary art and the fervour of a prophet combined to embellish and intensify the new presentation of old speculations; which had the further good fortune to address itself to a public as ripe and ready as Balak himself to accept the revelations of any seer whose prophecies were to its mind.

Missionaries, whether of philosophy or of religion, rarely make rapid way, unless their preaching fall in with the prepossessions of the multitude of shallow thinkers, or can be made to serve as a stalking-horse for the promotion of the practical aims of the still larger multitude, who do not profess to think much, but are quite certain they want a great deal. Rousseau's writings are so admirably adapted to touch both these classes that the effect they produced, especially in France, is easily intelligible. For, in the middle of the eighteenth century, French society (not

perhaps so different as may be imagined from other societies before and since) presented two large groups of people who troubled themselves about politics—in any sense other than that of personal or party intrigue. There was an upper stratum of luxurious idlers, jealously excluded from political action and consequently ignorant of practical affairs, with no solid knowledge or firm principles of any sort; but, on the other hand, open-minded to every novelty which could be apprehended without too much trouble, and exquisitely appreciative of close deductive reasoning and clear exposition. Such a public naturally welcomed Rousseau's brilliant developments of plausible first principles by the help of that *a priori* method which saves so much troublesome investigation.¹ It just suited the "philosophes," male and female, interchanging their airy epigrams in salons, which had about as much likeness to the

¹ In his famous work on *Ancient Law* the late Sir Henry Maine has remarked, with great justice, that Rousseau's philosophy "still possesses singular fascination for the looser thinkers of every country;" that "it helped most powerfully to bring about the grosser disappointments of which the first French Revolution was fertile," and that "it gave birth, or intense stimulus, to the vices of mental habit all but universal at the time, disdain of positive law, impatience of experience, and the preference of *a priori* to all other reasoning" (pp. 89-92). I shall often have to quote *Ancient Law*. The first edition of this admirable book was published in 1861, but now, after twenty-nine years of growing influence on thoughtful men, it seems to be forgotten, or wilfully ignored, by the ruck of political speculators. It is enough to make one despair of the future that Demos and the Bourbons seem to be much alike in their want of capacity for either learning or forgetting.

Academy or to the Stoa, as the "philosophes" had to the philosophers of antiquity.

I do not forget the existence of men of the type of Montesquieu or D'Argenson in the France of the eighteenth century, when I take this as a fair representation of the enlightened public of that day. The unenlightened public, on the other hand, the people who were morally and physically debased by sheer hunger; or those, not so far dulled or infuriated by absolute want, who yet were maddened by the wrongs of every description inflicted upon them by a political system, which so far as its proper object, the welfare of the people, was concerned was effete and powerless; the subjects of a government smitten with paralysis for everything but the working of iniquity and the generation of scandals; these naturally hailed with rapture the appearance of the teacher who clothed passion in the garb of philosophy; and preached the sweeping away of injustice by the perpetration of further injustice, as if it were nothing but the conversion of sound theory into practice.

It is true that any one who has looked below the surface¹ will hardly be disposed to join in the cry which is so often raised against the "philosophes" that their "infidel and levelling" principles brought about the French Revolution. People, with political eyes in their heads, like the Marquis d'Argenson, saw that the Revolution was inevitable before Rousseau wrote a line. In truth, the Bull "Unigenitus," the interested restiveness of the Parliaments and the ex-

travagances and profligacy of the Court had a great deal more influence in generating the catastrophe than all the "philosophes" that ever put pen to paper. But, undoubtedly, Rousseau's extremely attractive and widely read writings did a great deal to give a colour of rationality to those principles of '89² which, even after the lapse of a century, are considered by a good many people to be the Magna Charta of the human race. "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," is still the war-cry of those, and they are many, who think, with Rousseau, that human sufferings must needs be the consequence of the artificial arrangements of society and can all be alleviated or removed by political changes.

The intellectual impulse which may thus be fairly enough connected with the name of the Genevese dreamer has by no means spent itself in the century and a half which has elapsed since it was given. On the contrary, after a period of comparative obscurity (at least outside France), Rousseauism has gradually come to the front again, and at present promises to exert once more a very grave influence on practical life. The two essays to which I have referred are, to all appearance, very little known to the present generation of those who have followed in Rousseau's track. None the less is it true that his teachings, filtered through innumerable channels and passing under other names, are still regarded as the foundations of political science by the existing representatives of the classes who were so much attracted by them when they were put forth. My friend,

¹ Those who desire to do so with ease and pleasure should read M. Rocquain's *L'Esprit révolutionnaire en France avant la Révolution*. It is really a luminous book, which ought to be translated for the benefit of our rising public men, who, having had the advantage of a public school education, are so often unable to read French with comfort. For deeper students there is, of course, the great work of M. Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*. [An excellent condensed English version of M. Rocquain's book, by Miss J. D. Hunting, was published in 1891.]

² Sir H. Maine observes that the "strictly juridical axiom" of the lawyers of the Antonine era ("omnes homines naturâ æquales sunt"), after passing through the hands of Rousseau, and being adopted by the founders of the Constitution of the United States, returned to France endowed with vastly greater energy and dignity, and that "of all 'the principles of 1789' it is the one which has been least strenuously assailed, which has most thoroughly leavened modern opinion, and which promises to modify most deeply the constitution of societies, and the politics of States" (*Ancient Law*, p. 96).

Mr. John Morley, who probably knows more about Rousseau and his school than anybody else¹ must have been entertained (so far as amusement is possible to the subject of the process of "heckling") when Rousseau's *plats*, the indigestibility of which he exposed so many years ago, were set before him as a wholesome British dish; the situation had a certain piquancy, which no one would appreciate more keenly.

I happened to be very much occupied upon subjects of a totally different character, and had no mind to leave them, when the narrative of this occurrence and some letters to which it gave rise, appeared in the *Times*. But I have very long entertained the conviction that the revived Rousseauism of our day is working sad mischief, leading astray those who have not the time, even when they possess the ability, to go to the root of the superficially plausible doctrines which are disseminated among them. And I thought it was my duty to see whether some thirty years' training in the art of making difficult questions intelligible to audiences without much learning, but with that abundance of keen practical sense which characterises English workmen of the better class, would enable me to do something towards the counteraction of the fallacious guidance which is offered to them. Perhaps I may be permitted to add that the subject was by no means new to me. Very curious cases of communal organisation and difficult questions involving the whole subject of the rights of property come before those whose duty it is to acquaint themselves with the condition of either sea or freshwater fisheries, or with the administration of Fishery Laws. For a number of years it was my fate to discharge such

¹ If I had not reason to think that Mr. Morley's *Rousseau*, and Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law*, especially the admirable chapters III. and IV., must be unknown to many political writers and speakers, and *a fortiori* to the general public, there would be no excuse for the present essay, which simply restates the case which they have so exhaustively treated.

duties to the best of my ability; and, in doing so, I was brought face to face with the problem of landownership and the difficulties which arise out of the conflicting claims of commoners and owners in severalty. And I had good reason to know that mistaken theories on these subjects are very liable to be translated into illegal actions. I cannot say whether the letters which I wrote in any degree attained the object (of vastly greater importance, to my mind, than any personal question) which I had in view. But I was quite aware, whatever their other results, they would probably involve me in disagreeable consequences; and, among the rest, in the necessity of proving a variety of statements, which I could only adumbrate within the compass of the space that the *Times* could afford me, liberal as the editor showed himself to be in that respect. What I purpose to do in the course of the present essay is to make good these shortcomings; to show what Rousseau's doctrines were; and to inquire into their scientific value—with, I hope, that impartiality which it beseems us to exhibit in inquiries into ancient history. Having done this I propose to leave the applications of the conclusions at which I arrive to the intelligence of my readers, as I shall thus escape collision with several of my respected contemporaries.²

² From Mr. Herbert Spencer's letter in the *Times* of the 27th of November, 1889, I gather that he altogether repudiates the doctrines which I am about to criticise. I rejoice to hear it; in the first place, because they thus lose the shelter of his high authority; secondly, because, after this repudiation, anything I may say in the course of the following pages against Rousseauism cannot be disagreeable to him; and, thirdly, because I desire to express my great regret that, in however good company, I should have lacked the intelligence to perceive that Mr. Spencer had previously repudiated the views attributed to him by the land socialists. May I take this opportunity of informing the many correspondents who usually favour me with comments (mostly adverse, I am sorry to say) on what I venture to write, that I have no other answer to give them but Pilate's: "What I have written I have written"? I have no energy to waste on replies to irresponsible criticism.

I have indicated two sources from which our knowledge of Rousseau's system may be derived, and it is not worth while to go any further. But it is needful to observe that the dicta of the author of the "*Contrat Social*," published in 1762, are not unfrequently very hard—indeed I might say impossible—to reconcile with those of the author of the "*Discours*," which appeared eight years earlier; and that, if any one should maintain that the older essay was not meant to be taken seriously, or that it has been, in some respects, more or less set aside by the later, he might find strong grounds for his opinion. It is enough for me that the same *a priori* method and the same fallacious assumptions pervade both.

The thesis of the earlier work is that man, in the "state of nature," was a very excellent creature indeed, strong, healthy, good and contented; and that all the evils which have befallen him, such as feebleness, sickness, wickedness, and misery, result from his having forsaken the "state of nature" for the "state of civilisation." And the first step in this downward progress was the setting up of rights of several property. It might seem to a plain man that the argument here turns on a matter of fact: if it is not historically true that men were once in this "state of nature"—what becomes of it all? However, Rousseau tells us, in the preface to the "*Discours*," not only that the "state of nature" is something which no longer exists, but that "perhaps it never existed, and probably never will exist." Yet it is something "of which it is nevertheless necessary to have accurate notions in order to judge our present condition rightly." After making this singular statement, Rousseau goes on to observe: "*Il faudrait même plus de philosophie qu'on ne pense à celui qui entreprendrait de déterminer exactement les précautions à prendre pour faire sur ce sujet de solides observations.*" And, certainly, the amount of philosophy re-

quired to base an argument on that which does not exist, has not existed, and, perhaps, never will exist, may well seem unattainable—at any rate, at first sight. Yet, apart from analogies which might be drawn from the mathematical sciences—where, for example, a straight line is a thing which has not existed, does not exist, and probably never will exist, and yet forms a good ground for reasoning; and the value of which I need not stop to discuss—I take it that Rousseau has a very comprehensible idea at the bottom of this troublesome statement. What I conceive him to mean is that it is possible to form an ideal conception of what ought to be the condition of mankind;¹ and that, having done so, we are bound to judge the existing state of things by that ideal. That assumption puts us on the "high *priori* road" at once.

I do not suppose that any one is inclined to doubt the usefulness of a political ideal as a goal towards which social conduct should strive, whether it can ever be completely realised or not; any more than any one will doubt that it is useful to have a moral ideal towards which personal conduct should tend, even though one may never reach it. Certainly, I am the last person to question this, or to doubt that politics is as susceptible of treatment by scientific method as any other field of natural knowledge.²

¹ Compare *Ancient Law*:—"The Law of Nature confused the Past and the Present. Logically, it implied a state of Nature which had once been regulated by Natural Law; yet the jurisconsults do not speak clearly or confidently of the existence of such a state" (p. 73). "There are some writers on the subject who attempt to evade the fundamental difficulty by contending that the code of Nature exists in the future and is the goal to which all civil laws are moving" (p. 74). The jurisconsults conceived of Natural Law "as a system which ought gradually to absorb Civil Laws" (p. 76). "Its functions were, in short, remedial, not revolutionary or anarchical. And this unfortunately is the exact point at which the modern view of a Law of Nature has often ceased to resemble the ancient" (p. 77).

² In the course of the correspondence in the

But it will be admitted that, great as are the advantages of having a political ideal, fashioned by an absolute rule of political conduct, it is perhaps better to do without one, rather than to adopt the first phantasm, bred of fallacious reasonings and born of the unscientific imagination, which presents itself. The benighted traveller, lost on a moor, who refuses to follow a man with a lantern is surely not to be commended. But suppose his hesitation arises from a well-grounded doubt as to whether the seeming luminary is anything but a will o' the wisp? And, unless I fail egregiously in attaining my purpose, those who read this paper to the end will, I think, have no doubt that the political lantern of Rousseauism is a mere corpse candle and will plunge those who follow it in the deepest of anarchic bogs.

There is another point which must be carefully borne in mind in any discussion of Rousseau's doctrines; and that is the meaning which he attaches to the word "inequality." A hundred and fifty years ago, as now, political and biological philosophers found they were natural allies.¹ Rousseau is not intelligible without Buffon, with whose earlier works he was evidently acquainted, and whose influence in the following passage is obvious:—

Times to which I have referred, I was earnestly exhorted to believe that the world of politics does not lie outside of the province of science. My impression is that I was trying to teach the public that great truth, which I had learned from Mill and Comte, thirty-five years ago; when, if I mistake not, my well-meaning monitor was more occupied with peg-tops than with politics. See a lecture on the "Educational Value of the Natural History Sciences" delivered in 1854 (*Lay Sermons*, p. 97).

¹ The publication of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* began in 1749. Thus Rousseau was indebted to the naturalists; on the other hand, in the case of the elder Darwin, who started what is now usually known as Lamarck's hypothesis, the naturalist was set speculating by the ideas of the philosopher Hartley, transmitted through Priestley. See *Zoonomia*, I. sect. xxxix. p. 483 (ed. 1796). I hope some day to deal at length with this curious fact in scientific history.

It is easy to see that we must seek the primary cause of the differences by which men are distinguished in these successive changes of the human constitution; since it is universally admitted that they are, naturally, as equal among themselves as were the animals of each species before various physical causes had produced, in some of them, the varieties which we observe. In fact, it is not conceivable that these first changes, by whatever means they were brought about, altered, at once and in the same way, all the individuals of a species; but some having become improved or deteriorated, and having acquired different qualities, good or bad, which were not inherent in their nature, the others remained longer in their original state; and such was the first source of inequality among men, which is more easy to prove thus, in a general way, than to assign exactly to its true causes. ("Discours," Preface.)

In accordance with this conception of the origin of inequality among men, Rousseau distinguishes, at the outset of the "Discours," two kinds of inequality:—

the one which I term *natural*, or *physical*, because it is established by Nature, and which consists in the differences of age, health, bodily strength, and intellectual or spiritual qualities; the other, which may be called *moral*, or *political*, because it depends on a sort of convention, and is established, or at least authorised, by the consent of mankind. This last inequality consists in the different privileges which some enjoy, to the prejudice of others, as being richer, more honoured, more powerful than they, or by making themselves obeyed by others.

Of course the question readily suggests itself: Before drawing this sharp line of demarcation between natural and political inequality, might it not be as well to inquire whether they are not intimately connected, in such a manner that the latter is essentially a consequence of the former? This question is indeed put by Rousseau himself. And, as the only answer he has to give is a piece of silly and insincere rhetoric about its being a question fit only for slaves to discuss in presence of their masters, we may fairly conclude that he knew well enough he dare not grapple with it. The only safe course for him was to go by on the other side and as far as the breadth of the road would permit; and, in the rest of his

writings to play fast and loose with the two senses of inequality, as convenience might dictate.

With these preliminary remarks kept well in view, we may proceed to the discussion of those fundamental theses of the "Discourse" and of the "Social Contract" which Rousseau calls the "principes du droit politique." Rousseau defines his object thus :—

Je veux chercher si dans l'ordre civil il peut y avoir quelque règle d'administration légitime et sûre, en prenant les hommes tels qu'ils sont et les lois tels qu'elles peuvent être. Je tâcherai d'allier toujours dans cette recherche ce que le droit permet avec ce que l'intérêt prescrit, afin que la justice et l'utilité ne se trouvent point divisées.¹

In other words, our philosopher propounds "sure," that is "absolute," principles which are, at once ethically and politically, sufficient rules of conduct, and that I understand to be the precise object of all who have followed in his track. It was said of the Genevese theorist, "Le genre humain avait perdu ses titres ; Jean-Jacques les a retrouvés" ; just as his intellectual progeny declare that the nation ought to "resume" the landed property of which it has, unfortunately, lost the title-deeds.

We are now in a position to consider what the chief of these principles of the gospel according to Jean-Jacques are :—

1. All men are born free, politically equal, and good, and in the "state of nature" remain so ; consequently it is

¹ *Contrat Social*, livre 1^{er}. Compare Hobbes's dedication of *Human Nature* written in 1640 :—"They who have written of justice and policy in general, do all invade each other and themselves with contradictions. To reduce this doctrine to the rules and infallibility of reason there is no way, but, first, put such principles down for a foundation, as passion, not mistrusting, may not seek to displace ; and afterwards to build there on the truth of cases in the law of Nature (which hitherto have been built in the air) by degrees till the whole have been inexpugnable." However, it must be recollected that Hobbes does not start from *a priori* principles of ethics, but from the practical necessities of men in society.

their natural right to be free, equal, and (presumably, their duty to be) good.²

2. All men being equal by natural right, none can have any right to encroach on another's equal right. Hence no man can appropriate any part of the common means of subsistence—that is to say, the land or anything which the land produces—without the unanimous consent of all other men. Under any other circumstances, property is usurpation, or, in plain terms, robbery.³

3. Political rights, therefore, are based upon contract ; the so-called right of conquest is no right, and property which has been acquired by force may rightly be taken away by force.⁴

I am bound to confess, at the outset, that, while quite open to conviction, I incline to think that the obvious practical consequences of these propositions are not likely to conduce to the welfare of society, and that they are certain to prove as injurious to the poor as to the rich. Due allowance must be made for the possible influence of such prejudice as may flow from this opinion upon my further conviction that, regarded from a purely theoretical and scientific point of

² *Contrat Social*, v. pp. 98, 99. The references here given are to the volumes and pages of Mussay Pathay's edition (1826), *Discours*, *passim* ; see especially p. 268.

³ *Discours*, pp. 257, 258–276. How many wild sermons have been preached on this text :—"Ignorez-vous qu'une multitude de vos frères périt ou souffre du besoin de ce que vous avez de trop, et qu'il vous fallait un consentement exprès et unanime du genre humain pour vous approprier sur la subsistance commune tout ce qui alloit au-delà de la vôtre ?"

⁴ *Discours*, pp. 276, 280 ; *Contrat*, chap. iii. :—"Telle fut ou dut être" (charming alternative !) "l'origine de la société et des lois, qui donnèrent de nouvelles entraves au foible et de nouvelles forces au riche, détruisirent sans retour la liberté naturelle, fixèrent pour jamais la loi de la propriété et de l'inégalité, d'une adroite usurpation firent un droit irrévocable, et, pour le profit de quelques ambitieux, assujettirent désormais tout le genre humain au travail, à la servitude et à la misère" (*Discours*, p. 278). Behold the quintessence of Rousseauism—methods and results—with practical application, legible by the swiftest runner !

view, they are so plainly and demonstrably false that, except for the gravity of their practical consequences, they would be ridiculous.

What is the meaning of the famous phrase that "all men are born free and equal," which gallicised Americans, who were as much "philosophes" as their inherited common sense and their practical acquaintance with men and with affairs would let them be, put forth as the foundation of the "Declaration of Independence"? I have seen a considerable number of new-born infants. Without wishing to speak of them with the least disrespect—a thing no man can do, without, as the proverb says, "fouling his own nest"—I fail to understand how they can be affirmed to have any political qualities at all. How can it be said that these poor little mortals who have not even the capacity to kick to any definite end, nor indeed to do anything but vaguely squirm and squall, are equal politically, except as all zeros may be said to be equal? How can little creatures be said to be "free" of whom not one would live for four and twenty hours if it were not imprisoned by kindly hands and coerced into applying its foolish wandering mouth to the breast it could never find for itself? How is the being whose brain is still too pulpy to hold an idea of any description to be a moral agent either good or bad? Surely it must be a joke, and rather a cynical one too, to talk of the political status of a new-born child? But we may carry our questions a step further. If it is mere abracadabra to speak of men being born in a state of political freedom and equality, thus fallaciously confusing positive equality—that is to say, the equality of powers—with the equality of impotences; in what conceivable state of society is it possible that men should not merely be born, but pass through childhood and still remain free? Has a child of fourteen been free to choose its language and all the connotations with which words became burdened in their

use by generation after generation? Has it been free to choose the habits enforced by precept and more surely driven home by example? Has it been free to invent its own standard of right and wrong? Or rather, has it not been as much held in bondage by its surroundings and driven hither and thither by the scourge of opinion, as a veritable slave, although the fetters and the whip may be invisible and intangible?

Surely, Aristotle was much nearer the truth in this matter than Hobbes or Rousseau. And if the predicate "born slave" would more nearly agree with fact than "born free," what is to be said about "born equal"? Rousseau, like the sentimental rhetorician that he was, and half, or more than half, sham, as all sentimental rhetoricians are, sagaciously fought shy, as we have seen, of the question of the influence of nature upon political equality. But those of us who do not care for sentiment and do care for truth may not evade the consideration of that which is really the key of the position. If Rousseau, instead of letting his children go to the *enfants trouvés*, had taken the trouble to discharge a father's duties towards them, he would hardly have talked so fast about men being born equal, even in a political sense. For, if that merely means that all new-born children are political zeros—it is, as we have seen, though true enough, nothing to the purpose; while, if it means that, in their potentiality of becoming factors in any social organisation—citizens in Rousseau's sense—all men are born equal, it is probably the most astounding falsity that ever was put forth by a political speculator; and that, as all students of political speculation will agree, is saying a good deal for it. In fact, nothing is more remarkable than the wide inequality which children, even of the same family, exhibit, as soon as the mental and moral qualities begin to manifest themselves; which is earlier than most people fancy. Every family spontaneously becomes a polity. Among

the children, there are some who continue to be "more honoured and more powerful than the rest, and to make themselves obeyed" (sometimes, indeed, by their elders) in virtue of nothing but their moral and mental qualities. Here, "political inequality" visibly dogs the heels of "natural" inequality. The group of children becomes a political body, a *civitas*, with its rights of property, and its practical distinctions of rank and power. And all this comes about neither by force nor by fraud, but as the necessary consequence of the innate inequalities of capability.

Thus men are certainly not born free and equal in natural qualities; when they are born, the predicates "free" and "equal" in the political sense are not applicable to them; and as they develop year by year, the differences in the political potentialities with which they really are born, become more and more obviously converted into actual differences—the inequality of political faculty shows itself to be a necessary consequence of the inequality of natural faculty. It is probably true that the earliest men were nomads. But among a body of naked wandering savages, though there may be no verbally recognised distinctions of rank or office, superior strength and cunning confer authority of a more valid kind than that secured by Acts of Parliament; there may be no property in things, but the witless man will be poverty-stricken in ideas, the clever man will be a capitalist in that same commodity, which in the long run buys all other commodities; one will miss opportunities, the other will make them; and, proclaim human equality as loudly as you like, Witless will serve his brother. So long as men are men and society is society, human equality will be a dream; and the assumption that it does exist is as untrue in fact as it sets the mark of impracticability on every theory of what ought to be, which starts from it.

And that last remark suggests that there is another way of regarding

Rousseau's speculations. It may be pointed out that, after all, whatever estimate we may form of him, the author of works which have made such a noise in the world could not have been a mere fool; and that, if, in their plain and obvious sense, the doctrines which he advanced are so easily upset, it is probable that he had in his mind something which is different from that sense.

I am a good deal disposed to think that this is the case. There is much to be said in favour of the view that Rousseau, having got hold of a plausible hypothesis, more or less unconsciously made up a clothing of imaginary facts to hide its real nakedness. He was not the first nor the last philosopher to perform this feat.

As soon as men began to think about political problems, it must have struck them that, if the main object of society was the welfare of its members (and until this became clear, political action could not have risen above the level of instinct¹), there were all sorts of distinctions among men, and burdens laid upon them, which nowise contributed to that end. Even before the

¹ It is not to be forgotten that what we call rational grounds for our beliefs are often extremely irrational attempts to justify our instincts. I cannot doubt that human society existed before language or any ethical consciousness. Gregarious animals form polities, in which they act according to rules conducive to the welfare of the whole society, although, of course, it would be absurd to say that they obey laws in the juridical sense. The polities of the masterless dogs in Eastern cities are well known. And, in any street of an English town, one may observe a small dog chased by a bigger, who turns round the moment he has entered his own territory and defies the other; while, usually, after various manifestations of anger and contempt, the bigger withdraws. No doubt the small dog has had previous experience of the arrival of assistance under such circumstances, and the big one of the effects of sticks and stones and other odd missiles; no doubt, the associations thus engrained are the prime source of the practical acknowledgment of ownership on both sides. I suspect it has been very much the same among men.

great leveller, Rome, had actually thrown down innumerable social and national party-walls, had absorbed all other forms of citizenship into her own, and brought the inhabitants of what was then known as the world under one system of obligations—thoughtful men were discovering that it was desirable, in the interests of society, that all men should be as free as possible, consistently with those interests; and that they should all be equally bound by the ethical and legal obligations which are essential to social existence. It will be observed that this conclusion is one which might be arrived at by observation and induction from the phenomena of past and present experience. My belief is that it is the conclusion which must be reached by those means, when they are rightly employed—and that, in point of fact, the doctrines of freedom and equality, so far as they were preached by the Stoics and others, would have had not the least success, if they had not been so far approved by experience and so far in harmony with human instincts, that the Roman jurists found they could work them up with effect into practical legislation. For the *a priori* arguments of the philosophers in the last century of the Republic, and the first of the Empire, stand examination no better than those of the philosophers in the centuries before and after the French Revolution. As is the fashion of speculators, they scorned to remain on the safe, if humble, ground of experience, and preferred to prophesy from the sublime cloudland of the *a priori*; so that, busied with deduction from their ideal “ought to be” they overlooked the “what has been,” the “what is,” and the “what can be.”

It is to them that we owe the idea of living “according to nature”; which begot the idea of the “state of nature”; which begot the notion that the “state of nature” was a reality, and that, once upon a time, “all men were free and equal”—which again begot the

theory, that society ought to be reformed in such a manner as to bring back these halcyon days of freedom and equality; which begot *laissez faire* and universal suffrage; which begot the theory so dear to young men of more ambition than industry, that, while every other trade, business, or profession requires theoretical training and practical skill, and would go to the dogs if those who carry them on were appointed by the majority of votes of people who know nothing about it and very little about them—the management of the affairs of society will be perfectly successful, if only the people who may be trusted to know nothing, will vote into office the people who may be trusted to do nothing.

If this is the political ideal of the modern followers of Rousseau, I, for my part, object to strive after it, or to do anything but oppose, to the best of my ability, those who would fain drive us that way. Freedom, used foolishly, and equality, asserted in words, but every moment denied by the facts of nature, are things of which, as it seems to me, we have rather too much already. If I mistake not, one thing we need to learn is the necessity of limiting individual freedom for the general good; and another, that, although decision by a majority of votes may be as good a rough-and-ready way as can be devised to get political questions settled, yet that, theoretically, the despotism of a majority is as little justifiable and as dangerous as that of one man; and yet another, that voting power, as a means of giving effect to opinion, is more likely to prove a curse than a blessing to the voters, unless that opinion is the result of a sound judgment operating upon sound knowledge. Some experience of sea-life leads me to think that I should be very sorry to find myself on board a ship in which the voices of the cook and the loblolly boys counted for as much as those of the officers, upon a question of steering, or reefing topsails; or where

the "great heart" of the crew was called upon to settle the ship's course. And there is no sea more dangerous than the ocean of practical politics—none in which there is more need of good pilotage and of a single, unfaltering purpose when the waves rise high.

The conclusion of the whole matter, then, would seem to be that the doctrine that all men are, in any sense, or have been, at any time, free and equal, is an utterly baseless fiction. Nor does the proposition fare much better if we modify it, so as to say that all men ought to be free and equal, so long as the "ought" poses as a command of immutable morality. For, assuredly, it is not intuitively certain "that all men ought to be free and equal." Therefore, if it is to be justified at all *a priori*, it must be educible from some proposition which is intuitively certain; and unfortunately none is forthcoming. For the proposition that men ought to be free to do what they please, so long as they do not infringe on the equal rights of other men, assumes that men have equal rights and cannot be used to prove that assumption. And if, instead of appealing to philosophy we turn to revealed religion, I am not aware that either Judaism or Christianity affirms the political freedom or the political equality of men in Rousseau's sense. They affirm the equality of men before God—but that is an equality either of insignificance or of imperfection.

With the demonstration that men are not all equal under whatever aspect they are contemplated, and that the assumption that they ought to be considered equal has no sort of *a priori* foundation—however much it may, in reference to positive law, with due limitations, be justifiable by considerations of practical expediency—the bottom of Rousseau's argument, from *a priori* ethical assumptions to the denial of the right of an individual to hold private property, falls out. For Rousseau, with more logical consistency than some of those who

have come after him, puts the land and its produce upon the same footing. "Vous êtes perdus si vous oubliez que les fruits sont à tous, et que la terre n'est à personne," says he.¹

From Rousseau's point of view (and for the present, I leave any other aside), this is, in fact, the only rational conclusion from the premisses. The attempt to draw a distinction between land, as a limited commodity, and other things as unlimited, is an obvious fallacy. For, according to him,² the total habitable surface of the earth is the property of the whole human race in common. Undoubtedly, the habitable and cultivable land amounts to a definite number of square miles, which, by no effort of human ingenuity, at present known or suspected, can be sensibly increased beyond the area of that part of the globe which is not covered by water; and therefore its quantity is limited. But if the land is limited, so is the quantity of the trees that will grow on it; of the cattle that can be pastured on it; of the crops that can be raised from it; of the minerals that can be dug from it; of the wind and of the water-power, afforded by the limited streams which flow from the limited heights. And, if the human race were to go on increasing in number at its present rate, a time would come when there would not be standing ground for any more; if it were not that, long before that time, they would have eaten up the limited quantity of food-stuffs and died like the locusts that have consumed everything eatable in an oasis of the desert. The attempt to draw a distinction between land as limited in quantity, in the sense, I suppose, that it is something that cannot be imported—and other things are unlimited, because they can be imported—has arisen from the fact that Rousseau's modern followers entertain the delusion

[¹ Which may be Englished, in brief, "Crops are everybody's and land is nobody's."]

² As to Hobbes, but on different grounds.

that, consistently with their principles, it is possible to suppose that a nation has right of ownership in the land it occupies. If the Island of Great Britain is the property of the British nation, then, of course, it is true that Britons cannot have more than somewhere about 90,000 square miles of land, while the quantity of other things they can import is (for the present, at any rate), practically, if not strictly, unlimited. But how is the assumption that the Britons own Britain, to be reconciled with the great dictum of Rousseau, that a man cannot rightfully appropriate any part of this limited commodity, land, without the unanimous consent of all his fellow men? My strong impression is that if a parti-coloured plébiscite of Europeans, Chinese, Hindoos, Negroes, Red Indians, Maoris, and all the other inhabitants of the terrestrial globe were to decree us to be usurpers, not a soul would budge; and that, if it came to fighting, Mr. Morley's late "hecklers" might be safely depended upon to hold their native soil against all intruders, and in the teeth of the most absolute of ethical politicians, even though he should prove from Rousseau,

"Exceedingly well
That such conduct was quite atrocious."

Rousseau's first and second great doctrines having thus collapsed, what is to be said to the third?

Of course, if there are no rights of property but those based on contract, conquest, that is to say, taking possession by force, of itself can confer no right. But, as the doctrine that there are no rights of property but those based on the consent of the whole human race—that is, that A. B. cannot own anything unless the whole of mankind formally signify their assent to his ownership—turns out to be more than doubtful in theory and decidedly inconvenient in practice, we may inquire if there is any better reason for the assertion that force

can confer no right of ownership. Suppose that in the old seafaring days, a pirate attacked an East Indiaman—got soundly beaten and had to surrender. When the pirates had walked the plank, or been hanged, had the captain and crew of the East Indiaman no right of property in the prize—I am not speaking of mere legal right, but ethically? But if they had, what is the difference when nations attack one another; when there is no way out of their quarrel but the appeal to force, and the one that gets the better seizes more or less of the other's territory and demands it as the price of peace? In the latter case, in fact, we have a contract, a price paid for an article—to wit peace—delivered, and certain lands taken in exchange; and there can be no question that the buyer's title is based on contract. Even in the former alternative, I see little difference. When they declared war, the parties knew very well that they referred their case to the arbitrament of force; and if contracts are eternally valid, they are fully bound to abide by the decision of the arbitrator whom they have elected to obey. Therefore, even on Hobbes's or Rousseau's principles, it is not by any means clear to my mind that force, or rather the state of express or tacit contract which follows upon force, successfully applied, may not be plausibly considered to confer ownership.

But if the question is argued, as I think it ought to be, on empirical grounds—if the real question is not one of imagined *a priori* principle, but of practical expediency—of the conduct which conduces most to human welfare—then it appears to me that there is much to be said for the opinion that force effectually and thoroughly used, so as to render further opposition hopeless, establishes an ownership¹ which

¹ Submission to the Revolution of 1688 by Jacobites could be advocated ethically on no other ground, though all sorts of pretexts were invented to disguise the fact.

should be recognised as soon as possible. I am greatly disposed to think, that when ownership established by force has endured for many generations, and all sorts of contracts have been entered into on the faith of such ownership, the attempt to disturb it is very much to be deprecated on all grounds. For the welfare of society, as for that of individual men, it is surely essential that there should be a statute of limitations in respect of the consequences of wrongdoing. As there is nothing more fatal to nobility of personal character than the nursing of the feeling of revenge—nothing that more clearly indicates a barbarous state of society than the carrying on of a *vendetta*, generation after generation, so I take it to be a plain maxim of that political ethic which does not profess to have any greater authority than agreeableness to good feeling and good sense can confer, that the evil deeds of former generations—especially if they were in accordance with the practices of a less advanced civilisation, and had the sanction of a less refined morality—should, as speedily as possible, be forgotten and buried under better things.

“Musst immer thun wie neu geboren” is the best of all maxims for the guidance of the life of States, no less than of individuals. However, I express what I personally think, in all humility, in the face of the two patent facts, that there are persons of light and leading—with a political authority to which I can make not the remotest pretension, and with a weight of political responsibility which I rejoice to think can never rest on my shoulders—who by no means share my opinion, but who, on the contrary, deem it right to fan the sparks of revenge which linger among the embers of ancient discords; and to stand between the dead past and the living present, not with the healing purpose of the Jewish leader, but rather to intensify the plague of political strife, and hold aloft the brazen image of the father’s wrongs, lest

the children might perchance forget and forgive.

However, the question whether the fact that property in land was originally acquired by force invalidates all subsequent dealings in that property so completely, that no lapse of time, no formal legislation, no passing from hand to hand by free contract through an endless series of owners, can extinguish the right of the nation to take it away by force from the latest proprietor, has rather an academic than a practical interest, so long as the evidence that landed ownership did so arise is wanting. Potent an organon as the *a priori* method may be, its employment in the region of history has rarely been found to yield satisfactory results; and, in this particular case, the confident assertions that land was originally held in common by the whole nation, and that it has been converted into severalty by force, as the outcome of the military spirit rather than by the consent, or contract, characteristic of industrialism, or singularly ill-founded.

Let us see what genuine history has to say to these assertions. Perhaps it might have been pardonable in Rousseau to propound such a statement as that the primitive landowner was either a robber or a cheat; but, in the course of the century and a half which has elapsed since he wrote, and especially in that of the last fifty years, an immense amount of information on the subject of ancient land-tenure has come to light; so that it is no longer pardonable, in any one, to content himself with Rousseau’s ignorance. Even a superficial glance over the results of modern investigations into anthropology, archæology, ancient law and ancient religion, suffices to show that there is not a particle of evidence that men ever existed in Rousseau’s state of nature, and that there are very strong reasons for thinking that they never could have done so, and never will do so.

It is, at the least, highly probable that

the nomadic preceded any other social state ; and, as the needs of a wandering hunter's or pastor's life are far more simple than any other, it follows that the inequalities of condition must be less obvious among nomads than among settled people. Men who have no costume at all, for example, cannot be said to be unequally clothed ; they are, doubtless, more equal than men some of whom are well clothed and others in rags, though the equality is of the negative sort. But it is a profound mistake to imagine that, in the nomadic condition, any more than in any other which has yet been observed, men are either "free" or "equal" in Rousseau's sense. I can call to mind no nomadic nation in which women are on an equality with men ; nor any in which young men are on the same footing as old men ; nor any in which family groups, bound together by blood ties, by their mutual responsibility for bloodshed and by common worship, do not constitute corporate political units, in the sense of the city¹ of the Greeks and Romans. A "state of nature" in which noble and peaceful, but nude and propertyless, savages sit in solitary meditation under trees, unless they are dining or amusing themselves in other ways, without cares or responsibilities of any sort, is simply another figment of the unscientific imagination. The only uncivilised men of whom anything is really known are hampered by superstitions and enslaved by conventions, as strange as those of the most artificial societies, to an almost incredible degree. Furthermore, I think it may be said with much confidence that the primitive "land-grabber" did not either force or cheat his co-proprietors into letting him fence in a bit of the land which hitherto was the property of all.

¹ I may remind the reader that, in their original senses, *πόλις* and *civitas* mean, not an aggregation of houses, but a corporation. In this sense, the City of London is formed by the freemen of the City, with their Common Councillors, Aldermen, and Lord Mayor.

The truth is we do not know, and, probably, never shall know completely, the nature of all the various processes by which the ownership of land was originally brought about. But there is excellent ground for sundry probable conclusions² in the fact that almost all parts of the world, and almost all nations, have yielded evidence that, in the earliest settled condition we can get at, land was held as private or several property, and not as the property of the public, or general body of the nation. Now private or several property may be held in one of two ways. The ownership may be vested in a single individual person, in the ordinary sense of that word ; or it may be vested in two or more individuals forming a corporation or legal person ; that is to say, an entity which has all the duties and responsibilities of an individual person, but is composed of two or more individuals. It is obvious that all the arguments which Rousseau uses against individual land-ownership apply to corporate landownership. If the rights of A, B, and C are individually *nil*, you cannot make any more of your o by multiplying it by three. (ABC)—the corporation—must be an usurper if A, B, and C taken each by himself is so. Moreover, I think I may take it for granted that those who desire to make the State universal landowner, would eject a corporation from its estates with even less hesitation than they would expel an individual.

The particular method of early land-holding of which we have the most widespread traces is that in which each of a great number of moderate-sized portions of the whole territory occupied by a nation is held in complete and inalienable ownership³ by the males of a family,

² For the difficulties which attach to the establishment of such probable conclusions, see the remarkable work of M. Fustel de Coulanges—*Recherches sur quelques problèmes d'Histoire : Les Germains*.

³ Inalienable, that is, without the consent of the whole owning community.

or of a small number of actual or supposed kindred families, mutually responsible in blood feuds, and worshipping the same God or Gods. No female had any share in the ownership of the land. If she married outside the community she might take a share of the moveables; and, as a rule, she went to her husband's community. If, however, the community was short of hands, the husband might be taken into it, and then he acquired all the rights and responsibilities of the other members. Children born in the community became full members of it by domicile, so to speak, not by heredity from their parents. This primitive "city" was lodged in one or more dwellings, each usually standing in a patch of inclosed ground; of arable land in the immediate neighbourhood of the dwellings; while pasture and uncleared forest land lay outside all. Each commune was as jealous of its rights of ownership as the touchiest of squires; but, so long as the population was as scanty in proportion to the occupied territory, as was usually the case in ancient times, the communities got along pretty peaceably with one another. Any notion that all the communities which made up the nation had a sort of corporate overlordship over any one, still more that all the rest of the world had any right to complain of their "appropriation of the means of subsistence," most assuredly never entered the heads of our forefathers. But, alongside this corporate several ownership, there is strong ground for the belief that individual ownership was recognised, to a certain extent, even in these early times. The inclosure around each dwelling was understood to belong to the family inhabiting the dwelling; and, for all practical purposes, must have been as much owned by the head of it as a modern entailed estate is owned by the possessor for the time being. Moreover, if any member of the community chose to go outside and clear and cultivate some of the waste, the reclaimed land was thenceforth recognised as his,

that is to say, the right of ownership, in virtue of labour spent, was admitted.¹

Thus it is obvious that, though the early landholders were, to a great extent, collective owners, the imaginary rights of mankind to universal land-ownership, or even of that of the nation at large to the whole territory occupied, were utterly ignored; that, so far from several ownership being the result of force or fraud, it was the system established with universal assent; and that, from the first, in all probability, individual rights of property, under certain conditions, were fully recognised and respected. Rousseau was, therefore, correct in suspecting that his "state of nature" had never existed—it never did, nor anything like it. But it may be said, supposing that all this is true, and supposing that the doctrine that Englishmen have no right to their appropriation of English soil is nonsense; it must, nevertheless, be admitted that, at one time, the great body of the nation, consisting of these numerous landowning corporations, composed of comparatively poor men, did own the land. And it must also be admitted that now they do not; but that the land is in the hands of a relatively small number of actually or comparatively rich proprietors, who constitute perhaps not one per cent. of the population. What is this but the result of robbery and cheating? The descendants of the robbers and cut-throat soldiers who came over with William of Normandy, have been true to their military instincts, and have "conveyed" the property of the primitive corporations into their own possession. No doubt, that is history made easy; but here, once more, fact and *a priori* speculations cannot be made to fit.

Let us look at the case dispassionately, and by the light of real history. No doubt, the early system of land tenure by collective several ownership

¹ Rousseau himself not only admits, but insists on the validity of this claim in the *Contrat Social*, liv. i. chap. ix.

was excellently adapted to the circumstances in which mankind found themselves. If it had not been so, it would not have endured so long, nor would it have been adopted by all sorts of different races—from the ancient Irish to the Hindoos, and from the Russians to the Kaffirs and Japanese. These circumstances were in the main as follows: That there was plenty of land unoccupied; that population was very scanty and increased slowly; that wants were simple; that people were content to go on living in the same way, generation after generation; that there was no commerce worth speaking of; that manufactures were really that which they are etymologically—things made by the hands; and that there was no need of capital in the shape of money. Moreover, with such methods of warfare as then existed, the system was good for defence, and not bad for offence.

Yet, even if left to itself, to develop undisturbedly, without the intrusion of force, fraud or militarism in any shape, the communal system, like the individual-owner system or the State-owner system, or any other system that the wit of man has yet devised, would sooner or later have had to face the everlasting agrarian difficulty. And the more the communities enjoyed general health, peace, and plenty, the sooner would the pressure of population upon the means of support make itself felt. The difficulty paraded by the opponents of individual ownership, that, by the extension of the private appropriation of the means of subsistence, the time would arrive when men would come into the world for whom there was no place, must needs make its appearance under any system, unless mankind are prevented from multiplying indefinitely. For, even if the habitable land is the property of the whole human race, the multiplication of that race must, as we have seen, sooner or later, bring its numbers up to the maximum which the produce can support; and then the interesting problem

in casuistry, which even absolute political ethics may find puzzling, will arise: Are we, who can just exist, bound to admit the newcomers who will simply starve themselves and us? If the rule that any one may exercise his freedom only so far as he does not interfere with the freedom of others is all-sufficient, it is clear that the newcomers will have no rights to exist at all, inasmuch as they will interfere most seriously with the freedom of their predecessors. The population question is the real riddle of the sphinx, to which no political *Œdipus* has as yet found the answer. In view of the ravages of the terrible monster, over-multiplication, all other riddles sink into insignificance.

But to return to the question of the manner in which individual several ownership has, in our own and some other countries, superseded communal several ownership. There is an exceedingly instructive chapter in M. de Laveleye's well-known work on "Primitive Property," entitled "The Origin of Inequality in Landed Property." And I select M. de Laveleye as a witness the more willingly, because he draws very different conclusions from the facts he so carefully adduces to those which they appear to me to support.

After enumerating various countries in which, as M. de Laveleye thinks, inequality and an aristocracy were the result of conquest, he asks very pertinently—

But how were they developed in such countries as Germany, which know nothing of conquerors coming to create a privileged caste above a vanquished and enslaved population? Originally we see in Germany associations of free and independent peasants like the inhabitants of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden at the present day. At the close of the middle ages we find, in the same country, a feudal aristocracy resting more heavily on the soil, and a rustic population more completely enslaved than in England, Italy, or France (p. 222).

The author proceeds to answer the question which he propounds by show-

ing, in the first place, that the admission of the right of individuals and their heirs to the land they had reclaimed, which was so general, if not universal, created hereditary individual property alongside the communal property, so that private estates arose in the waste between the sparse communal estates. Now, it was not every family or member of a community that was enterprising enough to go out and clear waste lands, or that had the courage to defend its possessions when once obtained. The originally small size of the domains thus acquired, and the strong stimulus of personal interest, led to the introduction of better methods of cultivation than those traditional in the communes. And, finally, as the private owner got little or no benefit from the community, he was exempted from the charges and *corvées* laid upon its members. The result, as may be imagined, was that the private proprietors, aided by serf-labour, prospered more than the communities cultivated by their free members, seriously hampered them by occupying fresh waste lands, yielded more produce, and furnished wealth, which, with the help of the *majorat* system, remained concentrated in the hands of owners who, in virtue of their possessions, could maintain retainers; while, freed from the need to labour, they could occupy themselves with war and the chase, and, as nobles, attend the sovereign. On the other hand, their brethren, left behind in the communes, had little chance of growing individually rich or powerful, and had to give themselves up to agricultural toil. The Bishop of Oxford, in his well-known "Constitutional History of England" (vol. i., p. 51), puts the case, as his wont is, concisely and precisely: "As the population increased, and agriculture itself improved, the mark system must have been superseded everywhere." No doubt, when the nobles had once established themselves, they often added force and fraud to their other means of enlarging their borders.

But, to begin with, the inequality was the result, not of militarism, but of industrialism. Clearing a piece of land for the purpose of cultivating it and reaping the crops for one's own advantage is surely an industrial operation, if ever there was one.

Secondly, M de Laveleye points out that the Church was a great devourer of commune lands:—

"We know that a member of the commune could only dispose of his share with the consent of his associates, who had a right of resumption; but this right could not be exercised against the Church. Accordingly, in these days of religious fervour, the faithful frequently left to the Church all that they possessed, not only their house and its enclosure, but the undivided share in the *mark* attached to it" (p. 225). Thus an abbot, or a bishop, became co-proprietor with the peasants of a commune; and, with such a cuckoo in the nest, one can conceive that the hedge-sparrows might have a bad time. "Already by the end of the ninth century one-third of the whole soil of Gaul belonged to the clergy" (p. 225). But, if the men who left their property to the Church believed that they got their *quid pro quo* in the shape of masses for their souls, as they certainly did; and if the Churchmen believed as sincerely (and they certainly did) that they gave valuable consideration for the property left them, where does fraud come in? Is it not again a truly industrial operation? Indeed, a keen-witted and eminent Scotch judge once called a huge bequest to a Church "fire insurance," so emphatically commercial did the transaction appear to him.

Thirdly, personal several property was carved out of the corporate communal property in another fashion, to which no objection can be taken by industrialism.

Plots of arable land were granted to members of the commune who were skilled artificers, as a salary for their services. The craft transmitting itself

from father to son the land went with it and grew into an hereditary benefice.

Fourthly, Sir Henry Maine¹ has proved in a very striking manner, from the collection of the Brehon Laws of ancient Ireland, how the original communal landownership of the sept, with the allotment of an extra allowance of pasture to the chief, as the honorarium for his services of all kinds, became modified, in consequence of the power of keeping more cattle than the rest of the sept, thus conferred on the chief. He became a lender of cattle at a high rate of interest to his more needy sept-fellows, who when they borrowed became bound to do him service in other ways and lost status by falling into the position of his debtors. Hence the chief gradually acquired the characteristics of what naturalists have called "synthetic" and "prophetic" types, combining the features of the modern gombeen-man with those of the modern rack-renting landlord, who is commonly supposed to be a purely imported Norman or Saxon product, saturated with the very spirit of industrialism—namely, the determination to get the highest price for an article which is to be had. As a fact, the condition of the native Irish, under their own chiefs, was as bad in Queen Elizabeth's time as it has ever been since. Again, the status of the original commoners of the sept was steadily altered for the worse by the privilege which the chief possessed, and of which he freely availed himself, of settling on the waste land of the commune such broken vagabonds of other tribes as sought his patronage and protection, and who became absolutely dependent upon him. Thus, without war and without any necessity for force or fraud (though doubtless there was an adventitious abundance of both), the communal system was bound to go to pieces, and to be replaced by individual ownership, in consequence of

the operation of purely industrial causes. That is to say, in consequence of the many commercial advantages of individual ownership over communal ownership; which became more and more marked exactly in proportion as territory became more fully occupied, security of possession increased, and the chances of the success of individual enterprise and skill as against routine, in an industrial occupation, became greater and greater.

The notion that all individual ownership of land is the result of force and fraud appears to me to be on a level with the peculiarly short-sighted prejudice that all religions are the results of sacerdotal cunning and imposture. As religions are the inevitable products of the human mind, which generates the priest and the prophet as much as it generates the faithful; so the inequality of individual ownership has grown out of the relative equality of communal ownership in virtue of those natural inequalities of men, which, if unimpeded by circumstances, cannot fail to give rise quietly and peaceably to corresponding political inequalities.

The task I have set myself is completed, as far as it can be within reasonable limits. I trust that those who have taken the trouble to follow the argument, will agree with me that the gospel of Jean Jacques, in its relation to property, is a very sorry affair—that it is the product of an untrustworthy method, applied to assumptions which are devoid of foundation in fact; and that nothing can be more profoundly true than the saying of the great and truly philosophical English jurist, whose recent death we all deplore, that speculations of this sort are rooted in "impatience of experience and the preference of *a priori* to all other methods of reasoning."

Almost all the multitudinous causes which concurred in bringing about the French Revolution are happily absent in this country; and I have not the slightest fear that the preaching of any amount of

¹ See *Early History of Institutions*, especially Lecture vi.

political fallacy will involve us in evils of the magnitude of those which accompanied that great drama. But, seeing how great and manifold are the inevitable sufferings of men; how profoundly important it is that all should give their best will and devote their best intelligence to the alleviation of those sufferings

which can be diminished, by seeking out, and, as far as lies within human power, removing their causes; it is surely lamentable that they should be drawn away by speculative chimæras from the attempt to find that narrow path which for nations, as for individual men, is the sole road to permanent well-being.

NATURAL RIGHTS AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

[1890]

IN looking through a series of critical notices the other day, my eye was caught by a remark upon my essay "On the Natural Inequality of Men"—to the effect that it was well enough; but why should I have taken all that trouble to slay the slain?

Evidently, the propounder of the question believes that the doctrines of that school of political philosophers of which Rousseau was the typical representative, are not only killed but dead. But, whatever may hold good of men, doctrines do not necessarily die from being killed. Many a long year ago, I fondly imagined that Hume and Kant and Hamilton having slain the "Absolute," the thing must, in decency, de cease. Yet, at the present time, the same hypostatised negation, sometimes thinly disguised under a new name, goes about in broad daylight, in company with the dogmas of absolute ethics, political and other, and seems to be as lively as ever. It would seem to be to no purpose that the history of every branch of physical and historical science teems with examples of the fate which befalls the hasty generaliser who numbers, rather than weighs, supposed facts; and treats the rough approximations to truth obtained by the observation of highly complex phenomena as if they had the precision of geometrical theorems.

There is, unfortunately, abundant evidence that the vicious method of *a priori* political speculation which I have illustrated from the writings of Rousseau is not only in full vigour, but that it is exerting an influence upon the political action of our contemporaries which is extremely serious. No better

evidence of the fact need be adduced than the avidity with which the writings of political teachers of this school have been and are being read, especially among the more intelligent of the working classes; and I doubt if any book published during the last ten years has obtained a larger circulation among them, not only in this country but in the United States, than "Progress and Poverty." The other day there was a rumour that some devoted disciple of its author, Mr. Henry George, had bequeathed a large sum of money to him in order to aid in the propagation of his doctrines.

In some respects, the work undoubtedly deserves the success which it has won. Clearly and vigorously written, though sometimes weakened by superfluous rhetorical confectionery, "Progress and Poverty" leaves the reader in no doubt as to Mr. George's meaning, and thus fulfils the primary condition of honest literature. Nor will any one question the author's intense conviction that the adoption of his panacea will cure the ills under which the modern state groans.

Mr. George's political philosophy is, in principle, though by no means in all its details, identical with Rousseauism. It exhibits, in perfection the same *a priori* method, starting from highly questionable axioms which are assumed to represent absolute truth, and asking us to upset the existing arrangements of society on the faith of deductions from those axioms. The doctrine of "natural rights" is the fulcrum upon which he, like a good many other political philosophers, during the last 130 years, rests

the lever wherewith the social world is to be lifted away from its present foundations and deposited upon others. In this respect, he is at one, not only with Rousseau and his conscious or unconscious followers in France and in England; but, I regret to say, may claim the countenance of a far more scientifically minded and practical school of political thinkers—that of the French *Physiocrates* of the eighteenth century.

The founder of this school, Quesnay, the sagacious physician of Louis the Fifteenth, whom even that graceless prince appreciated and called his “thinker,” was an eminently practical man, especially conversant with agriculture. As the name taken by his disciples implies, his teaching was, professedly, based upon careful observation of, and induction from, the course of nature, as it bears upon politics. It would hardly be too much to say that we owe to the *Physiocrates* the modern clearness of conviction that the world of human society is as much the theatre of order and definite sequence of cause and effect as the world of extra-human nature; that there are rules of action, the observance of which brings about prosperity, while their neglect entails ruin, which have nothing to do with the laws of morality or with the ordinances of religion; and that the wicked who follow these rules will not beg their bread, while the pious who neglect them will. But Quesnay and his followers would have been more than mortal if they had escaped the influence of the spirit of their age; and though they never fell into the speculative monstrosities of Rousseau, yet, about the time that the latter was occupied with his essay on “Inequality,” Quesnay composed that short work entitled “*Le Droit Naturel*,” which is all too largely infected by the *a priori* method.

Quesnay begins by laying down the proposition that “Natural Right” may be “vaguely defined” as “the right which a man has to the things which are fit for

his enjoyment.” Truly a vague enough definition, and one that would need a great deal more defining before it could be safely turned to any practical account. Quesnay’s friend and collaborateur, Dupont de Nemours, in the introductory discourse prefixed to the collection entitled “*Physiocratie: ou constitution naturelle du gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre humain*,” published in 1768, has somewhat improved upon it. “Natural Right,” he says, is “the right a man has to do that which is to his advantage.” He considers that this right is founded upon the condition that we are “charged with our own preservation under penalty of suffering and death.” And he adds: “the final degree of punishment decreed by this sovereign *law* is superior to every other interest and to every arbitrary law.” “Natural Right,” then, is the right of a man to do anything necessary for his own preservation, and to possess himself of any means of enjoyment. It is possessed to its full and literal extent by any and every wholly isolated man. “Natural Right,” by this account of it, must vest in the individual before he has entered into the social state, and must be antecedent to all forms of relative justice and injustice. But the contemporaneous and contiguous existence of many such individuals, all of whom assert their natural rights, must also necessarily end in the Hobbesian state of war of each against all, unless they agree to conventions which shall allow to each his natural right to things enjoyable; or, in other words, his freedom to profit by the advantages which he is competent to obtain from the order of nature.¹

There seems to me to be a wonderful admixture of wholesome truth and of very unwholesome fiction in these propositions; and, as is not uncommon, the fiction has become popular while the truth is neglected. Indeed, Quesnay

¹ Daire, *Physiocrates*, Partie première, pp. 19, 20.

himself saw deeper than his disciple, and writes thus in the opening chapter of the treatise I have cited (Daire, p. 41):—

He who has said that the natural right of man is a nullity has spoken truly.

He who has said that the natural right of man is a right which nature teaches to all animals has spoken truly.¹

He who has said that the natural right of man is the right which his strength and his intelligence assure him has spoken truly.

He who has said that natural right is limited to the private interest of each man has spoken truly.

He who has said that natural right is a general and sovereign law, which regulates the rights of all men, has spoken truly.

He who has said that the natural right of men is the unlimited right of all to everything has spoken truly.

He who has said that the natural right of men is a right limited by a tacit or explicit convention has spoken truly.

He who has said that natural right has nothing to do with either justice or injustice has spoken truly.²

He who has said that natural right is a just, decisive, and fundamental right, has spoken truly.

But none has spoken truly in relation to all cases.

What is one to make of this litany of antinomies? Quesnay himself seems to have been content to leave the riddle unanswered—while his successors do not appear to have understood that there was a riddle to answer. Each proposition may certainly be plausibly justi-

¹ In a note Quesnay says:—"This is the definition of Justinian." It would be more accurate, I imagine, to say that it is derived from Ulpian: "*Jus naturale est, quod natura omnia animalia docuit: nam jus istud non humani generis proprium sed omnium animalium.*" It is to the same Roman jurist that we owe the maxim that all men, according to the law of Nature, are equal and free: "*Quod ad jus naturale attinet, omnes homines æquales sunt.*" "*Quum jure naturali omnes liberi nascerentur.*" See the exhaustive work of Voigt: *Das jus naturale æquum et bonum und jus gentium der Römer*, Bd. I, § 56, whence these citations are taken.

² In a note Quensay observes that this is the case of a man alone in a desert island, whose natural right to the products of the island involves neither justice nor injustice, inasmuch as these terms express the relations of two or more persons.

fied, and yet contradicts, or is hard to reconcile with, some other. Now, when this is the case, we may be pretty sure that the difficulty arises from some ambiguity of language. If "Natural Right" is susceptible of these opposing predicates, it must be that it stands for two or more widely different ideas. I propose to endeavour to show that this solution of the difficulty is correct.

Some time ago I fell in with an Indian tiger story of a peculiarly gruesome sort, and I repeat the substance of it, not from any especial love for horrible stories, but because the tale led me, and therefore may easily lead my readers, into a train of fruitful reflections upon this very question of "Natural Rights."

A tigress carried off an unfortunate Indian villager—as a cat may carry off a mouse—without doing the man any mortal injury. Tracked to her lair in the jungle, the brute was seen to set down the half-disabled captive before her cubs, who commenced mumbling and mauling him to the best of their infantine ability, while the tender mother complacently watched their clumsy efforts to deal with the big game she had brought home. But, if the man, driven desperate, succeeded for a moment in beating off his small tormentors and crawling away a few yards, a judiciously administered grip with the thoughtful parent's strong jaws, or a cuff from her heavy and sharp-clawed paw, at once reduced the victim to a state in which the cubs could safely resume their worrying and scratching.

I suppose that no one in whose imagination these words suffice to body forth a vision of the thing will fail to be horrified at the apparently wanton infliction of such grievous mental and bodily torture upon a harmless peasant; nor think, without satisfaction, of the justice done by the rifle shots that eventually laid the tigress and her

ferocious progeny low. The assertion that the tigress had a "natural right" to do what she did, or that she and her cubs were justified by the "Law of Nature" in their course of action, will perhaps seem to most a monstrous, if not a wicked, doctrine. Yet this very doctrine is implicitly inculcated in one of the most familiar works of an author from whom the youthful mind half a century ago derived its earliest impressions of ethics; and also, unfortunately, of poetry. The young people of that day were taught to repeat:

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For 'tis their nature to;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For God hath made them so."

As poetry, this pious doggerel is undoubtedly nought. But, as moral philosophy, ripe, nay even aged reflection must, I think, satisfy us that it is not only sound, but has the merit of putting the case in a nutshell. For, whatever tigers and tigresses may be and do, it is quite clear, if we adopt the creative hypothesis and believe that God made them, that He "made them so." The acts which we are pleased to denounce as wantonly cruel are, therefore, necessary and intentional consequences of the divine creative operation. In fact, if there is evidence of intention anywhere in the fabric of things, the study of the structure of one of the cats, great or small, will prove it to be a machine most admirably adapted to slay and tear to pieces other living quadrupeds; and will demonstrate that, if it was intended to do anything, it must have been intended to perform exactly that butcher's work which it executes so well.

On the other hand, if we prefer to say no more than there is good evidence for saying, it is unquestionably true that the "nature" or innate tendency of the whole race of tigers is to prey on other large animals, men included, inasmuch

as not only is their bodily and mental constitution especially fitted for that operation, but since they must perish if they fail to perform it. Tigers (as M. Dupont says of men) are charged with their own preservation under penalty of death. Moreover, when we inquire into the past history of these predaceous animals, we find that the cats, great and small, are but the last term of a long series of species of animals most of which are now extinct; which have succeeded one another through the tertiary epoch, therefore, for many thousands, or more probably millions, of years; and which, in their capacity of butchering machines, have undergone a steady though slow and gradual improvement, every step of which has been effected at the expense of an enormous total of suffering to the animals butchered. If, then, we deny that tigers have a natural right to torment and devour men, we really impeach, not the conduct of the tigers, but the order of nature. And if we ourselves, with our notions of right and wrong, are, like the tigers, products of that order, whence comes our competence to deny the exercise of their natural rights to those beings who stand upon the same foundation of natural right as ourselves? To say that a thing exists in nature and to say that it has a natural right to existence are, in fact, merely two ways of stating the same truth; which is that, in nature, fact and justification of the fact, or, in other words, might and right, are coextensive. To be and to have a natural right to be, to possess a faculty and to have the natural right to exert it, are all one. Thus, it really must be admitted that the hymnologist of my childish days has reason on his side. Whether children's little hands "were made to tear each other's eyes" or not, it does not lie with us to object to tigers, any more than to dogs, or bears, or lions, growling and fighting as their natures dictate. Beyond a doubt, by the "Law of Nature," which is the foundation of "natural right," the

cats and their carnivorous allies are justified.

Having thus established the "rights of tigers" to the exercise and enjoyment of the faculties with which nature has endowed them, it will be interesting to follow out the logical development of the doctrine, such as might be expected from a thoroughgoing advocate of those rights. It is admitted that a tiger has a natural right to eat a man; but if he may eat one man he may eat another, so that a tiger has a right of property in all men, as potential tiger-meat. Men are as much the "gratuitous offering" of nature to tigers for their subsistence, or part subsistence, as fruits are to men. But any one tiger has no more natural right of property in men than any other tiger. All tigers are free to eat any man they can seize: and, if two tigers are sneaking along through the jungle on opposite sides of a foot-path, their rights to the villager, who, travelling thereby, fondly imagines he is going home, are equal. So that we may safely enunciate the conclusion that all tigers have an equal natural right to eat all men.

I think it would be difficult to object to this argument on purely logical grounds; and the conclusions to which we are forced appear startling enough; but here we stop. If the advocate of the "rights of tigers" attempts to drive us into the further admission that, as tigers have a right to eat men, it is wrong of men to put obstacles in the way of their having their rights by refusing to be eaten, we protest against the doctrine, not on the low and selfish ground of mere personal interest, but because, however plausible, it is a patent fallacy. The champion of the "rights of tigers" has, in fact, made a convenient, though unwarrantable, jump from one sense of the word "right" to another—from "natural right" to "moral right." No doubt, he who hinders or refuses to admit a moral right is morally wrong—unjust, or, if you will, wicked. But very little consideration will show that

hindrance or denial of "natural rights" may not only be far from wrong, but is, in fact, a necessary consequence of the existence of such "natural rights." Grant that the tiger kills and eats men in the exercise of his natural right to preserve his own existence, and to do that for which nature has expressly fitted him; it is no less true that men kill tigers in the exercise of their equal natural right to preserve their existence. If the tiger is entitled by the law of nature to use his claws and teeth and soft-footed stealthy cleverness for the purpose of his self-preservation, the man may employ his hands and the weapons they are so admirably adapted to fabricate and wield, and use his still greater cunning, in tracking and stalking tigers to the like end.

Thus the natural rights of tigers and the natural rights of men, though quite indisputable and alike safely founded on the "Law of Nature," are diametrically opposed to one another. It follows, therefore, that they are rights to which no correlative duties correspond—rights of which the exercise may be impeded, or prevented, without the perpetration of wrong. And that is just the difference between "natural laws and rights," on the one hand, and "moral and civil laws and rights" on the other. Moral laws and civil laws are commands of an authority which may be disobeyed; but the sanctioning authority threatens and visits with penalties those who disobey. "Thou shalt not steal," the negative form of the recognition of rights of property, is both a moral and a civil law. It rests on the authority either of a Deity, or on that of conscience, or on that of some civil person whose dominion is recognised; and its sanction, or penalty, incurred by disobedience, is hell, or remorse, or imprisonment, or all three.

The proper object and effect of moral and civil laws are to benefit all who are subjected to them by bringing about a state of peace and mutual confidence—the laws restraining each individual from

acts which are hurtful and encouraging those which are beneficial to the polity of which he is a member. On the contrary, the "Law of Nature" is not a command to do, or to refrain from doing, anything. It contains, in reality, nothing but a statement of that which a given being tends to do, under the circumstances of its existence; and which, in the case of a living and sensitive being, it is necessitated to do, if it is to escape certain kinds of disability, pain, and ultimate dissolution. The natural right deduced from such a law of nature is simply a way of stating the fact; and there is, in the nature of things, no reason why a being possessing such and such tendencies to action should not carry them into effect. Confused with moral and civil laws and translated into the language of command, the law of nature would bid the individual: "Do what you will, so far as you can." But it is only inexactly and by way of metaphor, that we can speak of disobedience to a law of nature or of penalties for such disobedience. If, by impossibility, a tiger were to have an attack of the philozoic and vegetarian fanaticism which is going about, and to declare that he would neither kill, nor eat flesh, any more, he would undoubtedly undergo a lingering and painful death by starvation. But there is neither disobedience nor penalty here. The laws of nature are statements of tendencies, and if one law expresses the truth, that tigers which kill and eat will live and wax fat, another expresses the converse truth, that if tigers do not kill and eat, they will wax lean and die. The results are consequences of two modes of action, both of which are in accordance with natural law (or they could not occur) and not rewards or penalties. Indeed, that they cannot be the latter is clear from the further truth, that the tiger who has grown old in doing his best to fulfil the first "law of nature," as with age his limbs grow stiff and his tusks wear down, falls, very much against his will, under the second

"law" and dies as miserably of starvation as if he had refused to kill and eat on the loftiest of antivivisection and vegetarian principles.

The crown of the differences between the "law of nature" with its consequent "natural rights" and moral or civil laws lies in this: that consistent and thoroughgoing action, based upon the law of nature and the natural rights which flow from it, tends to benefit the individual at the expense of all other individuals whose needs and desires are of the same kind; and, so far from bringing about a state of peace among such individuals, necessitates a state of war—that is to say of either conscious or unconscious competition among them. The ceaseless and pitiless "struggle for existence" which obtains throughout the whole world of living things is, in truth, the inevitable consequence of the circumstances that each living being strives knowingly, or ignorantly, to exert all its powers for the satisfaction of its needs; and asserts a tacit claim to possess (to the exclusion of other beings) all the space on the earth's surface which it can occupy and to appropriate all the subsistence which it can utilise.¹ The state of sentient nature, at any given time, is the resultant of the momentarily balanced oppositions of millions upon millions of individuals, each doing its best to get all it can and to keep what it gets; each, in short, zealously obeying the law of nature and fighting tooth and nail for its natural rights. This is the *ne plus ultra* of individualism; and, wherever individualism has unchecked sway, a polity can no more exist than it can among the tigers who inhabit the same jungle. It is, in fact,

¹ Sixteen centuries ago, Ulpian drew the conclusion that according to the "*jus naturale*," the elements "*mare*," "*aer*," and, at any rate, "*litora*," are the common property of all living things. Isidore of Seville (see *Voigt*, i. 576), probably founding himself on Ulpian, reckons "*communis omnium possessio et omnium una libertas, acquisitio eorum quæ cœlo, terra marique capiuntur*," as among the natural rights of men.

the sum of all possible anti-social and anarchic tendencies.

Even among tigers (or at any rate tigresses), however, pure individualism does not always dominate. When the tigress has brought forth her cubs, and while she is nourishing, protecting, and training them, she and they enter into an association, formed of individuals held together by the attraction of the instincts which constitute the animal basis of sympathy, and thus constitute a polity, however small its scale and short its duration. And it will be observed that this most rudimentary of polities, the *family*, could not exist without the renouncement, on the part of the tigress at least, of some of the "Rights of Tigers." The tigress no longer acts upon her natural right of eating all she kills, for example; she acts as if she were conscious of duties towards her cubs. The cubs, on the other hand, are fond and more or less obedient, acting as if they had correlative duties towards their parent. It will not be supposed, I hope, that I suggest that either tigress or cubs are capable of entertaining moral ideas; all that I desire to point out is that, partly by instinct, partly by the effects of very simple experiences, both sides perform acts which a more developed intelligence symbolises by these moral ideas.

I have pointed out in the course of this discussion that among the jurists of old Rome, who first systematically developed the conceptions of the "Law of Nature" and "Natural Rights," Ulpian rightly judged that brutes came under such law and had such rights, no less than men. It is obvious that, without recurrence to that "state of nature" of mankind, of which so very much is said and so very little known, an individual man, isolated from his fellows and removed from all social relations, comes under the same law of nature; and has "natural rights" in exactly the same sense as the individual

tiger possesses them. Before the advent of man Friday, Robinson Crusoe's right and might were coextensive, except in so far as he might be influenced by remembrance of the moral and civil laws of his former social existence. There was no reason why he should abstain from doing anything it pleased him to do, and which lay within the scope of his natural faculties. No one would deny that he had a natural right to take possession of his cave; to cut down the trees that suited his purpose; to gather fruits; to kill any of the wild goats for his subsistence; to shoot any number of the cannibal visitors, who would otherwise kill him for their subsistence. Crusoe's "natural rights" thus potentially extended over the whole island and everything in it. According to the law of nature as defined by Quesnay, he was owner of everything therein which he desired and was able to appropriate. Suppose, however, that another wreck had simultaneously cast Will Atkins upon the opposite shore, and that Atkins had established himself there in Crusoe's fashion; then it is plain that the law of nature would confer upon him rights no less extensive. Crusoe and Atkins, stalking the same goat from opposite sides, would have been in a position identical with that of two tigers in the jungle, slinking after the same Hindoo, so far as the law of nature is concerned. And if each insisted upon exerting the whole of his natural rights, it is clear that there would be nothing for it but to fight for the goat. In the case of the men, as in that of the brutes, extreme and logical individualism means isolation and the state of war; it is plainly incompatible with the peace and co-operation which are the essentials of even temporary association. On the other hand, if the two men followed the dictates of the commonest common sense, not less than those of natural sympathy, they would at once agree to unite in peaceful co-operation with each other, for their mutual comfort and

protection. And that would be possible only if each agreed to limit the exercise of his natural rights so far as they might involve any more damage to the other than to himself. This is to say, the two men would, in reality, renounce the law of nature, and put themselves under a moral and civil law, replacing natural rights, which have no wrongs, for moral and civil rights, each of which has its correlative wrong. This, I take it, is the root of truth which saves the saying of Paul of Tarsus that "sin came by the law" from being a paradox. The solitary, individual man, living merely under the so-called law of nature, which cannot be violated, and having rights the contradictions of which are not wrongs, cannot sin. Wrong-doing becomes possible only when, by associating with another man, or other men, for peace and co-operation, the individual becomes implicitly, or explicitly, bound to observe certain rules of conduct in relation to him or them; any violation of these rules is a wrong.

Probably none of the political delusions which have sprung from the "natural rights" doctrine has been more mischievous than the assertion that all men have a natural right to freedom, and that those who willingly submit to any restriction of this freedom, beyond the point determined by the deductions of *a priori* philosophers, deserve the title of slave. But to my mind, this delusion is incomprehensible except as the result of the error of confounding natural with moral rights. It is undoubtedly true that a man, like a tiger or any other animal, has a natural right to freedom, if by that phrase we merely mean that, so far as he is a mere individual being, there is no reason why he should not do what he pleases. But that is a very harmless proposition, and neither despot nor slave-owner need boggle at it. If, on the other hand, the champion of freedom means, as he usually does, that the natural right to freedom affords, in itself, a ground for

objecting to this or that restraint upon the liberties of men who form a polity, the argument appears to me to be as sophistical as it is mischievous. For, as we have seen, it is a necessary condition of social existence that men should renounce some of their freedom of action; and the question of how much is one that can by no possibility be determined *a priori*. That which it would be tyranny to prevent in some states of society it would be madness to permit in others. The existence of a polity depends upon the adjustment of the two sets of forces which its component units, the individual men, obey—the repulsive of natural right, and the attractive and coactive of individual sympathy and corporate dominion. Which of them ought to predominate at any given time must surely depend upon external and internal circumstances and upon the degree of development of the polity. The Duke of Wellington is said to have defined martial law as "the will of the Commander-in-Chief for the time being"—that is to say, it is the sweeping away of all "rights," natural, civil, and moral, except so far as they are sanctioned by the commander. Yet, surely, no one but a lunatic can maintain that, in case of invasion, or rebellion, threatening the social person—the polity—with destruction, that composite man has not as much natural right to take any measure essential to self-preservation, as an individual man has under the law of nature. And from this extreme case, to the petty question, as to whether the depositary of dominion in a polity has or has not the right to infringe the "natural right" of a man to leave the path in front of his house unswept of snow, there is an endless gradation in the importance of the problems, all of which can be solved only by the application of the same principles. Is it, or is it not, for the welfare of society at that time and under those circumstances—looking at the question all round and taking fully into

account the disadvantages of restraint of liberty—that its members should be compelled to do this, or be restrained from doing that?

The political delusions which spring from the ‘natural rights’ doctrine are multitudinous; but I think there is only one more which is worth attention at present. That is the extraordinary notion that the logical consequence of the “natural right” of all men to any given thing is the sharing of the rights of property in that thing equally among all the claimants. Let us suppose two boys, John and Peter. I take an apple out of my pocket, and I say, “This apple is entirely yours, John; and, Peter, it is also entirely yours. The whole apple belongs to each of you, and you have each a right to eat the whole of it. Now, my boys, you may eat it, so long as neither of you gives up any fraction of the right I have given him nor infringes the other’s right.” The boys, I take it, would be somewhat puzzled. If their common sense, *plus* their appetites, were stronger than their logical faculty, they would probably suggest that they should divide the apple and each eat half. But I should have to say “No. You are violating my conditions—which were that you should neither of you give up any portion of his right to the whole. The arrangement you propose necessitates that John should give up his right to one half, and Peter his right to the other.” Not improbably, my young friends, if of English extraction, might propose another way out of the difficulty; namely, the wager of battle. But again I should have to refuse. The trial by battle would unfortunately involve the infringement of the natural rights of the vanquished by the victor, which is, once more, contrary to my stipulation. In fact, under the conditions stated, the apple would have to remain uneaten.

Thus we see once more, that the absolute “natural rights” theory—that

is to say individualism pure and simple—if carried out logically, is merely reasoned savagery, utter and unmitigated selfishness, incompatible with social existence. And this would be obvious to every one, were it not that the ambiguous sense of the word “rights” gives a moral colour to human relations which are neither moral nor immoral, but, as Quesnay rightly says, antecedent to morality.

My readers may imagine that I have forgotten “Progress and Poverty.” By no means; the preceding pages must, in fact, be regarded as a sort of “Prolegomena” to that work and especially to the first chapter of the seventh book, which contains the theoretical foundation of the practical measure which its author advocates.

According to Mr. George, society is very ill; and he proposes a method of treatment professedly based upon strict deduction from the principles of absolute political physiology. Whether the remedy is calculated to achieve the results predicted, or not, is a question I shall not now discuss; but it will be admitted that it is drastic, consisting as it does in neither more nor less than the eviction of all several landowners and the confiscation of that which is, and, for many centuries has been, regarded as their undoubted property. The measure is of exactly the same order as would be the confiscation of the interest of all money belonging to working men in savings banks, on the ground that interest, as usury, is contrary to the principles of absolute ethics—an opinion which it must be remembered has been (perhaps still is) supported by papal infallibility; which is, at least, equal in weight to the philosophical species of that commodity. Surely the medicine is a strong medicine. Now I humbly submit, that while one might take Epsom salts, on the recommendation of the first old woman who proposed that remedy for a sick headache, a rational

man would like to have clearly intelligible reasons, or extremely trustworthy authority, before he ventured with an equally light heart, upon croton oil or tartar emetic. The latter might certainly put an end to his sick headache—but what if at the same time it put an end to him? So, it is at any rate possible, that the expropriation of land-owners, while it might put an end to a state of things inconsistent with the principles of absolute political ethics, might also destroy the society it strove to heal. Therefore, I think we are bound to see that Mr. George's "absolute" principles are "absolutely" true before we act upon even the most logical of deductions from them. Without presumption, it may be said to be just possible that the principles may be unsound and the deductions fallacious.

In the chapter to which I have referred, the author sets out by putting the question, What constitutes the rightful basis of property? And I have conscientiously endeavoured to set forth, accurately, the essentials of his answer in the following abstract of it.

I. All men have equal rights :

The laws of nature are the decrees of the Creator. There is written in them no recognition of any right save that of labour; and in them is written broadly and clearly the equal right of all men to the use and enjoyment of Nature: to apply to her by their exertions and to receive and possess her reward. Hence, as Nature gives only to labour, the exertion of labour in production is the only title to exclusive possession. ("Progress and Poverty," 1889, p. 237.)

II. There is no foundation for any rightful title to ownership except this: That a man has a right to himself; to the use of his own powers; to the enjoyment of the fruit of his own exertions (p. 236); therefore, to whatsoever he makes or produces.

III. The right to that which is produced is "vested" in the producer by natural law (p. 236). It is also a "fundamental law of Nature that her enjoyment

by man shall be consequent upon his exertion" (p. 241).

IV. Land is a gratuitous offering of Nature, not a thing produced by labour (p. 238); all men therefore have equal rights to it (p. 239). These rights are inalienable, as existing men cannot contract away the rights of their successors (p. 240). Every infant who comes into the world has as good a right to landed estates as their present possessors, by whom he is, in fact, robbed of his share (p. 240).

This, I believe, is a complete, if a succinct, statement of Mr. George's case. And I, for one, am quite prepared to admit that, if it can be sustained, the sooner the foundations of our present polity are broken up and replaced by something less open to objection, the better. But even Mr. George, I imagine, will admit that the enterprise is grave, and by no means to be undertaken with a light heart, still less with that superficial intellectual apprehension which comes of a light head. The political philosopher who uses his *a priori* lever, knowing that it may stir up social discord, without the most conclusive justification, to my mind comes perilously near the boundary which divides blunders from crimes.

The several elements of the proposition which I have quoted under I. might have been taken almost *verbatim* from the writings of the Rousseauites and the Physiocrats. But it is one of the most interesting features of *a priori* speculation, that different philosophers, starting from verbally identical propositions, arrive at contradictory conclusions. And the Physiocrats deduced the right and the necessity of maintaining several ownership of land from the principles common to them and Mr. George, as confidently as, and, in my judgment, with much better reason than, Mr. George deduces its hideous wrongfulness and the paramount necessity of abolishing it. The equality of men question has already been sufficiently discussed.

If, as I maintain, there is no such thing as natural equality among men, then of course any argument based upon it is necessarily worthless. From the fact that men are unequal it cannot well be concluded that they have "equal rights to the use and enjoyment of nature."

Passing from this point, we are met by the broad assertion that "the exertion of labour in production is the only title to exclusive possession." So far Mr. George is at one with the Physiocrats, who also rest the claim to ownership on labour bestowed. Let us consider the grounds upon which Mr. George rests this assertion. We need not trouble ourselves whether they are the same or different from those set forth by his predecessors.

The following questions and answers enlighten us on this head.

What constitutes the rightful basis of property? What is it that enables a man to say justly of a thing, "It is mine"? Is it not, primarily, the right of a man to himself, to the use of his own powers, to the enjoyment of the fruits of his own exertions? ("Progress and Poverty," p. 236.)

And, on the same page, we are told that the title to everything produced by human exertions "descends from the original producer, in whom it is vested by natural law." Here we are back again on the ground of the "law of nature" and "natural rights," according to which, as we have seen, a man has a right to keep anything he is strong enough to keep, whether he has produced it or not. But the law of nature affords not the least reason why another man who is stronger should not take his possession away from him.

As I have already fully shown, there is not the least connection between the natural rights of the solitary individual and the moral or civil rights of the man who has entered into association with others. A man may justly say that it is no more than the "use of his own powers," to knock another down and rob him of his dinner; and that it is no more than

"the enjoyment of the fruits of his own exertions" to proceed to eat that dinner. Is it pretended that the man who has entered into association with others retains those "natural rights"?

But let us assume, for the sake of argument, not only that labour is the "only" title to exclusive possession, but that the foundation of this title lies in the right of a man to himself; and in which is, somewhat sophistically, included the right to the use of his own powers and the enjoyment of the fruits of his own exertions. If we try to believe both these propositions at once, surely we fall into perplexities worse than any that have yet befallen us. If labour is the only title to exclusive possession; if, for example, there can be no exclusive possession of cultivated land simply and solely because, according to Mr. George, it is not a product of labour—propositions on the axiomatic certainty of which the whole fabric of "Progress and Poverty" rests—how in the world does a man come by the "right to himself"? I have paid a good deal of attention to those branches of natural history which treat more especially of man, but never yet have I come across even the smallest grounds for believing that a man has ever been known to make himself, or to endow himself by his own labour with the powers he exerts. I have heard often enough of men who were said to be self-made. Indeed, I have known some cases in which the fact was alleged in justification of the ways of Providence, and for the purpose of shifting the responsibility for the existence of some people on to the right shoulders. But I have always taken this phrase about "self-making" to be a metaphor, and a very foolish one, inasmuch as the men said to be self-made are usually those whom nature has especially favoured with costly gifts and exceptional opportunities. No doubt it may be said, with justice, that a man who learns diligently and strives hard to do right, really bestows labour on himself, and does so far fulfil the necessary con-

ditions of self-ownership laid down in "Progress and Poverty." But, on the other hand, might not his teachers, on the very same ground, claim possession of the fruits of their labours in him? Might not the mother, who not only bore him, but bore with him, day and night, for half-a-dozen years, fed him, clothed him, nursed him in sickness, taught him the rudiments of civilisation—might not she rightfully appeal to this wonderful labour-test of ownership?

Is there any logical way out of the following argumentation, the like of which is perhaps to be found only in "Alice in Wonderland"? The exertion of labour in production is the only title to exclusive possession. No gratuitous offering of Nature can be the subject of such private ownership. Therefore a man can have no exclusive possession of himself, except in so far as he is the product of the exertion of his own labour and not a gratuitous offering of Nature. But it is only a very small part of him which can in any sense be said to be the product of his own labour. The man's physical and mental tendencies and capacities, dependent to a very large extent on heredity, are certainly the "gratuitous offering of Nature"; if they belong to anybody, therefore, they must belong to the whole of mankind, who must be, so to speak, a kind of collective slaveowners, all of each. So much of the man as depends on the care taken of him in infancy and childhood is the property of his mother, or of those who took her place. Another smaller portion belongs to the people who educated him. What remains is his own. So that the man's right to himself and to all his powers and to all the fruits of his labour, which the writer of "Progress and Poverty" makes the foundation of his system, turns out, if we follow another fundamental proposition of the same author to its logical consequences, to be a right to a mere fraction of himself and to the exercise of the powers which exclusively belong to that fraction. Surely it would take a greater sage than

Solomon to settle the respective claims of mankind in general, the mother and the educators, to the ownership of a child; and when these were satisfied, what might remain in the shape of a right to himself would be hardly big enough to form a safe basis for anything, let alone property.

Unless my readers can see their way better than I can through this logic-chopping maze, we must give up the attempt to reconcile the two fundamental propositions of the system we are discussing: the first, that labour is the "only" title to exclusive possession, and the second, that the foundation of this title lies in the right of a man to himself—that is to say to the exclusive possession of himself. What our political philosopher appears to me to mean is this. A man is the exclusive possessor of himself and of the powers with which he is endowed by Nature; therefore he is the exclusive possessor of whatever is brought into existence by the exertion of those powers in the form of labour. On the other hand, a man possesses, exclusively, nothing else than these powers, therefore he cannot be the exclusive possessor of anything but that which they produce. Substantially, as I have said, it is the position taken up by the Physiocrats, and, right or wrong, it is, at any rate, intelligible. But I do not quite see how it is to be proved by any one who disputes it. The statement that a man is the exclusive possessor of himself, even in the sense of bare ownership, is most assuredly not known to be true by intuition—as, for example, the proposition that two straight lines will not enclose a space is said to be. The whole ancient Roman world would have cried out against it. For them, a man's children, grown up or not, no less than his slaves, were so far from being exclusive possessors of themselves that their father could dispose of them as he thought fit. Nor, as far as I know, is there any part of the modern world in which a legal "infant" has the full

ownership of himself and the absolute right to the usufruct of his own powers. Again, to the best of my knowledge, there is no country or nation in which an adult man has, or ever had, in any sense, the exclusive possession of himself. On the contrary, the State invariably lays claim to him for the discharge of various military or civil offices, and to more or less of the fruits of his exertions in the shape of rates and taxes for the support of the machinery of external defence and internal protection. In truth, as I have already pointed out, the very existence of society depends on the fact that every member of it tacitly admits that he is not the exclusive possessor of himself, and that he admits the claim of the polity of which he forms a part, to act, to some extent, as his master. I do not think we need discuss, any further, propositions which, as they are stated, are contradictory; and which, when they are remodelled so as to escape such contradiction, fall into the no less fatal difficulty of contradicting plain facts. The axiom that a man has a right to himself, in the sense in which it is used in "Progress and Poverty," is a baseless assumption of exactly the same order as that other that all men are free and equal.

However, there is no greater mistake than the hasty conclusion that opinions are worthless because they are badly argued. The principle that "the exertion of labour in production is the only title to exclusive possession" has a great deal to say for itself if we only substitute "may be usefully considered to be a" for "is the only." And, besides this, it will be interesting to trace out its logical consequences, even without such alteration. For we shall find our result to be wonderfully different from that set forth in "Progress and Poverty." It is there declared to be irreconcilable with exclusive (or several) ownership of land. I think that it will become apparent that it authorises the several ownership of land to exactly the same extent as it

does the several ownership of anything else.¹

Let us consider what "Progress and Poverty" has to say about this question.

What most prevents the realisation of the injustice of private property in land is the habit of including all the things that are made the subject of ownership in one category, as property. . . . The real and natural distinction is between things which are the produce of labour and things which are the gratuitous offerings of Nature; or, to adopt the terms of political economy, between wealth and land. These two things are in essence and relations widely different, and to class them together as property is to confuse all thought when we come to consider the justice, or the injustice, the right or wrong of property. . . .

The essential character of the one class of things is that they embody labour, are brought into being by human exertion, their existence or non-existence, their increase or diminution, depending on man. The essential character of the other class of things is that they do not embody labour, and exist irrespective of human exertion and irrespective of man; they are the field or environment in which man finds himself; the storehouse from which his needs must be supplied; the raw material upon which and the forces with which his labour alone can act.—("Progress and Poverty," pp. 238—239.)

The latter kind of property is land, the former all other commodities which constitute men's possessions; and the latter are said, it will be observed, to be "brought into being by human exertion, their existence or non-existence, their increase or diminution depending on man." Surely this is an assertion which, though pardonable enough as a common manner of speaking, becomes a glaring fallacy the moment it is regarded as a scientific statement from which the most serious practical consequences are deducible. Can anything whatever, in strict truth, be said to be "brought into being by human exertion"? Let us consider one of the earliest and simplest products of human industry, a flint

¹ See the clear recognition of this fact in L'Abbé Baudeau's *Première Introduction à la Philosophie Économique*, 1771, in Daire's collection (p. 657). All *biens* or commodities, including land, are, in the long run, more or less fashioned natural products; "*présents de la nature, mais aussi effets de l'art.*"

implement. Probably, its earliest condition was a natural flint nodule, such as one may find on any chalk down, rounded at one end, roughly sharp at the other, and thus convenient to the hand of the savage who picked it up. Now did he thus acquire any right of property in his find or not? He certainly spent no labour upon it, beyond that of taking possession. It was emphatically "a gratuitous offering of Nature," just as much as the land on which it lay. The existence or the non-existence of flints, their increase or diminution, nowise depends on man; they exist irrespectively of him, their quantity is strictly limited, and no man, by taking thought, can add a flint to those which already exist. If taking possession could give a title to the one thing, why not to the other? But suppose it did not. Let it occur to our forefather that a few knocks with another stone would chip the thin end of his flint to a sharper edge and make it a handier tool or weapon. Let him give those half-dozen blows; then, forsooth, it "embodies labour" and may be said to have been "brought into being by human exertion." By the sacramental operation of these half-dozen taps, that which previously was the common property of all men has now become several property vested "by natural law" absolutely in one man.

With the gradual improvement of the art of flint chipping, the implement advanced from the rough, hardly modified, natural nodule to the exquisitely symmetrical and delicate axe, or spear, or arrow head, of a subsequent epoch, or to the still more finished ground axes of yet later date. The quantity of labour invested in each implement, therefore, steadily increased, as time went on, in proportion to the quantity of the raw flint. But the latter was always there. The assertion that the most perfected and artificial of these implements is "brought into being by human exertion," becomes a gross error if it leads us to

forget that, without the peculiar physical properties of the flint, which are emphatically "the gratuitous offering of nature," any amount of human exertion would be thrown away.

What is true in this extremely simple case, is true of everything which is said to be produced by human industry. In all such things there is something—a bundle of natural qualities and powers which exists irrespectively of human exertion—and something, a shaping and modification of the bundle, which is the effects of human exertion. It is only the relative proportion of the two which varies.¹ A man who hurls a stone loads it with a dose of labour which evaporates when the missile strikes its object, and the stone returns to its previous condition of a mere offering of Nature. A man who slices the same stone and cuts a cameo out of the slice, permanently incorporates an enormous amount of labour with it.

In the one case, the "gratuitous offering" is at a maximum, in the other at a minimum; but the foundation in each case is a gift of Nature.

"Progress and Poverty" sets before us the case of a steel pen with much elaboration (p. 236). But the author fails to notice the patent fact that the iron ore, the existence of which is the *conditio sine quâ non* of that of the pen, is a gratuitous offering of Nature. The well-known case of the chronometer balance-wheel spring would have still better exemplified the maximum incorporation of labour with the minimum of "the gratuitous offering."

Now is there any real difference between land and other things in this respect? In Upper Egypt, I have stood with one foot on soil bearing a rich green crop, and the other on the stony desert, as barren as a brick floor, which extended for hundreds of miles to the westward without supporting so much as a blade

¹ I have long since argued all this out in my *Introductory Primer of Science*.

of grass. The green crop, in fact, reached exactly as far as the muddy water of the Nile had been carried by the labour of the irrigator. Surely, in this case, the cultivable land "embodied labour" and had no more existence independently of human exertion than the pen or the watch spring.

In the state of nature, I doubt if ten square miles of the surface of the chalk downs of Sussex would yield pickings enough to keep one savage for a year. But, thanks to the human labour bestowed upon it, the same area actually yields, one way or another, to the agriculturist the means of supporting many men. If labour is the foundation of the claim to several ownership, on what pretext can the land, in this case also, be put upon a different footing from the steel pen? The same argument holds good for even the richest soil in the west of North America or in the south of Russia. In the natural state of such land, the savage hunter needs access to a vast area in order to make even a precarious livelihood. The labour spent upon it is an important factor in bringing about its rich harvests.

If we keep these simple and obvious truths in mind, the value of the following argument will be readily appraised:—

The right to exclusive ownership of anything of human production is clear. No matter how many the hands through which it has passed, there was at the beginning of the line, human labour—some one who, having procured or produced it by his exertions, had to it a clear title as against all the rest of mankind, and which could justly pass from one to another by sale or gift.¹

Suppose, however, that we let this go and proceed to the next sentence:—

But at the end of what string of conveyances or grants can be shown or supposed a like title to any part of the material universe?

Well, but surely all "human produc-

tions," from the roughest flint implement to the most exquisite chronometer, are "parts of the material universe"? We have seen that man cannot make flints; nor can he make the iron, or gold, or sodium, or silicon, which enters into the structure of the watch or the pen. His most consummate art is but a moving into certain places of the parts of the material universe with which Nature supplies him at least as gratuitously as she supplies land.

What then becomes of the next part of the argument?

To improvements such an original title can be shown, but it is a title only to the improvements and not to the land itself. If I clear a forest, drain a swamp, or fill a morass, all I can justly claim is the value given by these exertions. They give me no right to the land itself, no claim other than to my equal share with every other member of the community in the value which is added to it by the growth of the community.

By a parity of reasoning, it would seem that I might say to a chronometer maker: "The gold and the iron of this timepiece, and, in fact, all the substances out of which it is constructed, are parts of the material universe, therefore the property of mankind at large. It is very true that your skill and labour have made a wonderful piece of mechanism out of them; but these are only improvements. Now you are quite entitled to claim the improvements, but you have no right to the gold and the iron—these belong to mankind."

The watchmaker might reasonably think the task set before him as difficult as that imposed upon Shylock, when he was told that he was entitled to have his pound of flesh, but that he must shed no blood in the cutting it out. He might urge that for all practical purposes the "improvements" are the chronometer, while the gratuitous offering of Nature in the shape of raw material is relatively insignificant. To the ordinary mind there seems to be a great deal of sanity in this

¹ *Progress and Poverty*, p. 242.

contention : not so to our political philosopher.

But it will be said : "There are improvements which in time become indistinguishable from the land itself!" Very well ; then the title to the improvements becomes blended with the title to the land : the individual right is lost in the common right. It is the greater that swallows up the less, not the less that swallows up the greater. Nature does not proceed from man, but man from Nature, and it is unto the bosom of Nature that he and all his works must return again. (p. 243.)

What answer is appropriate to such stuff as this but Mr. Burchell's famous, if unpolite, monosyllable "Fudge" ?

It is one of the special characteristics of the *a priori* school to assume the exact truth of any currently received proposition which is convenient for the business of deductive brain-spinning. But everyone who is conversant with things, and not merely with what is more or less properly said about things, is aware that most widely received propositions, even in many branches of physical science, may be only approximately true ; and that if a chain of deductions of unusual weight is to be suspended from any of them, it is highly needful to examine it afresh, in order to see whether it will bear the strain—whether, in fact, it is accurate enough for the new purpose to which it is to be put. For ordinary purposes, a foot rule is an accurate measure, but it does not follow that it will suffice for ascertaining the exact length of the base line of a trigonometrical survey.

In this very case of the ownership of land, Mr. George essentially agrees with the Physiocrats who declared agriculture to be the only really productive industry, because land alone produces the food-stuffs by which men maintain their existence. In a rough and ready sense this is true, and it would be pedantic to object to it. But when such a statement is taken as the peg on which to hang deductions which end in grave practical consequences, it is needful to

re-examine it thoroughly. And an elementary knowledge of the realities of the case enables one to see that, in any but a popular sense, the proposition is untrue. In a strictly scientific sense, the soil is no more a producer than air and water and sunshine are ; indeed, is altogether less important than they as a condition of production. For food-plants, which are the producers and the only producers of food-stuffs properly so called, could not possibly get on without air, water, and sunshine, though they might do without soil. It would be possible to grow a crop of food-plants, no part of which had ever been in contact with the soil. On the other hand, the richest of soils may be as barren as the desert in regard to economic production—for the simple reason that it is occupied by a luxuriant growth of plants that are not producers of food-stuffs adapted to human needs.

The "gratuitous offering of Nature" in the shape of a hundred acres of tropical forest would be of not much more use to a savage than the like area of a gorse common.

We have all this time been occupied with the eleven pages—not very large pages either—which make up the first chapter of the seventh book of "Progress and Poverty" ; but there are more fallacies than pages, and I have not yet done with them. Indeed, like a careful entertainer, I have saved some of the best for the last. Here is a very fine one :—

The Almighty, who created the earth for man, and man for the earth, has entailed it upon all the generations of the children of men by a decree written upon the constitution of things—a decree which no human action can bar and no prescription determine. (p. 240.)

One would think that the utterer of these "prave 'ords" had been the conveyancer who effected the entail of which he speaks thus confidently. Big sounding but empty phrases may be the

making of a stump-orator; but what is to be said of them in the mouth of a professed thinker? And what is the practical outcome of this tall talk?

Though his titles have been acquiesced in by generation after generation, to the landed estates of the Duke of Westminster, the poorest child that is born in London to-day has as much right as his eldest son. Though the sovereign people of the State of New York consent to the landed possessions of the Astors, the puniest infant that comes wailing into the world in the squalidest room of the most miserable tenement house, becomes at that moment seized of an equal right with the millionaires. And it is robbed if the right is denied. (p. 240.)

Landowners can make no just claim to compensation if society choose to resume its right. ("Progress and Poverty," Preface, p. vii.)

Who would not be proud to be able to orate in this fashion? Whose heart would not beat high at the tempest of cheers which would follow stirring words like these addressed to needy and ignorant men? How should the impassioned speaker's ear be able to catch a tone as of the howl of hungry wolves among the cheers? Why should he care that his stirring words might stir up the plain enough conclusion: Well, if these things are all ours as much as theirs, and we are the stronger, why do we not take our own, and that at once? What harm in robbing robbers?

Well, whether exhortations in this style are legitimate or not, this much is certain—that, as I hinted before, it is desirable to make very sure of your ground before proceeding to such extremities. Many years ago I heard of an Englishman who had gone to see the Coliseum at Rome by moonlight. He had been warned that the place was haunted by thieves, and was on the alert. Sure enough, a man brushed hastily past him, and the Englishman, looking back, saw a watch in his hand. Without more ado, our countryman, being a prompt sort of person, knocks the fellow down, captures the watch, and makes off to

his hotel, lest there should be accomplices about. And, lo! when he is safe in his room he finds he has two watches.

I am disposed to think that the communities who follow out Mr. George's suggestions will find themselves, on Mr. George's own principles, in the position of our too ready-fisted Briton. For, according to Mr. George, that deed of entail which he should have somewhere in a tin box in his office, confers the land upon "all the generations of the children of men." Hence it follows that the London infant has no more title to the Duke of Westminster's land, and the New York baby no more to Messrs. Astor's land, than the child of a North American squaw, of a native Australian, or of a Hottentot. Property of the community, forsooth! What right has any community, from a village to a nation, to several property in land more than an individual man has?

Natural justice can recognise no right in one [*body of men*] to the possession and enjoyment of land that is not equally the right of all [*their*] fellows. (p. 240.)

Does it make any difference to the validity of this proposition if I substitute the words in italics for the actual words "man" and "his"? So the splendid prospect held out to the poor and needy is a mere rhetorical mirage; and they have been cheated out of their cheers by mere "bunkum." Consider the effect of a sober and truthful statement of what the orating person really meant or, according to his own principles, ought to mean; say of such a speech as this:—

My free and equal fellow countrymen, there is not the slightest doubt that not only the Duke of Westminster and the Messrs. Astor, but everybody who holds land from the area of a thousand square miles to that of a tablecloth, and who, against all equity, denies that every pauper child has an equal right to it, is a ROBBER. (Loud and long-continued cheers; the audience, especially the paupers, standing up and waving hats.) But, my friends, I am also bound to tell you that neither the pauper

child, nor Messrs. Astor, nor the Duke of Westminster, have any more right to the land than the first nigger you may meet, or the Esquimaux at the north end of this great continent, or the Fuegians at the south end of it. Therefore, before you proceed to use your strength in claiming your rights and take the land away from these usurping Dukes and robbing Astors,

you must recollect that you will have to go shares in the produce of the operation with the four hundred and odd millions of Chinamen, the hundred and fifty millions who inhabit Hindostan, the——(loud and long-continued hisses; the audience, especially the paupers, standing up and projecting handy movables at the orator).

GOVERNMENT : ANARCHY OR REGIMENTATION

[1890]

As a problem of political philosophy, Government presents three principal aspects. We may ask in whom is the sovereign authority vested? Or by what machinery should that authority be exercised? Or in respect of what matters is its exercise legitimate?

The first two of these questions have been discussed by philosophers and fought over by factions from the earliest times. Innumerable battles have been waged about the rival claims of kings, nobles and popular leaders to the "right divine to govern wrong"; and for, or against, the excellence of this or that legislative and administrative apparatus. The third question, on the other hand, has come to the front only in comparatively recent times. But its importance has increased and is increasing rapidly; indeed, at present, it completely overshadows the others. The great problem of modern political philosophy is to determine the province of government. Is there, or is there not, any region of human action over which the individual himself alone has jurisdiction and into which other men have no business to intrude?

In the ancient polities of Greece and Rome hardly any part of human life, except a man's family religious practices, was thus sacred from the intrusion of the State. Beyond the limits of this primary social group even religious liberty ceased. The ancient States permitted no acts which manifested want of respect, still less such as savoured of active opposition, to the cults authorised by the community. Any "infidels" who ventured to give open expression to their lack of faith in the gods of the city

were quickly taught that they had better keep their opinions to themselves; and no mercy was shown to those foreign religions the practices of which were judged to be inconsistent with the public welfare. But the old pagan religions had no propaganda; and as persecution is usually a correlate of proselytism, they were fairly tolerant in practice, until the progress of Christianity opened the eyes of the Roman authorities to the fact that civil existence, as they understood it, was incompatible with religious existence, as the Christians understood it. Pagan Rome, therefore, systematically persecuted Christianity with the intention of averting a political catastrophe of the gravest character. The Christian Church was the "International" of the emperors of the second and third centuries.

It is commonly supposed that the result of the intermittent, if internecine, warfare thus waged was the victory of the Church, and that, in the words of Julian, the Galilean conquered. But those who compare the Christianity of Paul with that of Constantine's prelates may be permitted to doubt whether, as in so many other cases, the vanquished did not in effect subdue the victor; whether there is not much more of Greek philosophy and of Roman organisation and ritual, than of primitive Christianity, in the triumphant Catholicism of the fourth and later centuries. One heritage of old Roman statecraft, at any rate, passed bodily over to Catholic churchcraft. As soon as the church was strong enough, it began to persecute with a vigour and consistency which the Empire never attained. In the ages of faith, Christian ecclesiastic-

ism raged against freedom of thought, as such, and compelled the State to punish religious dissidence as a criminal offence of the worst description. The ingenuity of pagan persecutors failed to reach the shameful level of that of the Christian inventors of the Holy Office; nor did the civil governors of pagan antiquity ever degrade themselves so far as to play the executioner for a camarilla of priests. The doctrine that the authority of the State extends to men's beliefs as well as to their actions, and, consequently, is conterminous with the whole of human life; and that the power of the State ought to be used for the promotion of orthodoxy and the extermination of heterodoxy is, in fact, a necessary corollary of Romanism, which, however disguised by prudence when the Papacy is weak, is sure to reappear when it is strong enough to dispense with hypocrisy. In the sixteenth century, the theory and practice of a thousand years had so thoroughly incorporated intolerance with Christianity, that even the great reformers held firmly by this precious heirloom of the ages of faith, whatever other shards of ecclesiastical corruption they might cast aside. Happily, the pretensions to infallibility of sects, who differed only in the higher or lower positions of the points at which they held on to the slope between Romanism and Rationalism, were so absurd, that political Gallios have been able to establish a *modus vivendi* among them. In this country, at any rate, the State is approaching, if it has not quite reached, a position of non-intervention (inclining perhaps to malevolent neutrality) in theological quarrels.

The prolonged intellectual and physical struggles which have thus tended to the more and more complete exclusion of a great group of human interests and activities from the legitimate sphere of governmental interference, have exerted a powerful influence on the general theory of Government. Two centuries have

elapsed since this influence, having for some time made itself felt among political philosophers, prompted that systematic inquiry into the proper limits of Governmental action in general, which is contained in John Locke's two "Treatises on Government," published in 1689.

The Revolution of 1688 marks one of the acute stages of that contest between Liberalism and Absolutism in these islands which began to manifest itself in a remote period of our history. Liberalism, represented by Parliamentary politicians and Protestant theologians, had prevailed over Absolutism, represented by the Stuarts in the political sphere, and by Papistry, open or disguised, in that of religion. The two "Treatises" form an apology for the victors. A theoretical justification for the accomplished fact was much needed; and Locke would have been unworthy of his reputation as a speculative philosopher, if he had failed to discover, or to invent, a theory sufficiently plausible to satisfy those who desired nothing better than to be persuaded of the justice of acts, by which, in any case, they meant to stand. The first essay is ostensibly directed at poor dead and gone Sir Robert Filmer, with his Adamic mythology (which, by the way, Locke treats as if it were serious history); but the controversial shots are intended to pass through their ostensible object and to slay the defenders of divine right, who lay behind the Filmerian outpost. In the second essay, "On Civil Government," which alone has any interest to us at the present day, the theory of State omnipotence propounded by Hobbes (and supposed, though wrongfully, to have been invented in the interests of monarchy) is vigorously assaulted.

Hobbes was a thinker and writer of marvellous power, and, take him altogether, is probably the greatest of English philosophers; but it was given to him, as little as to Locke, to escape from entanglement in the *a priori*

speculations which had come down mainly from the Roman jurists.¹ Setting out from the assumption of the natural equality of men, and of a primary "state of nature" in which every man strove for the full exercise of his "natural rights," and which was, therefore, a state of war of each against all; Hobbes further assumed that, in order to obtain the blessings of peace, men entered into a contract with one another, by which each surrendered the whole of his natural rights to the person or persons appointed, by common consent, to exercise supreme dominion, or sovereignty, over each and all of the members of the commonwealth constituted by the contract. The authority of the sovereign (whether one man or many, monarch or people²) to whom this complete surrender of natural rights was made, was thus absolute and unquestionable. From the time of the

¹ Hobbes's conception of the State may be sufficiently gathered from the following passages extracted from the *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society* (1651): "All men, therefore, among themselves are by nature equal; the inequality we now discern hath its spring from the civil law" (chap. i. 3). "Nature hath given to every one a right to all" (*ibid.* 10). "The natural state of men before they entered into society was. . . . a war of all men against all men" (*ibid.* 12). In whatever man or body of men dominion or governmental authority is vested, "each citizen has conveyed all his strength and power to that man or council" (chap. v. 11). The supreme power is *absolute* (chap. vi. 13), and comparable to the soul of the city as its will (*ibid.* 19). "The will of every citizen is in all things comprehended in the will of the city, and the city is not tied to the civil laws," and the will of the depository of dominion is the will of the city (chap. vi. 14). Judging of good and evil does not belong to private citizens (chap. xii. 1), nor do they possess any rights or liberties except such as the sovereign grants. All power, temporal and spiritual, is united (under Christ) in the sovereign authority of a Christian city, and absolute obedience is due to it. When the sovereign is not Christian, and his commands are contrary to those of the Church, the subject must, disobeying but not resisting, "go to Christ by martyrdom" (chap. xviii. 13).

² See *Philosophical Rudiments*, chapters vi. and vii.

surrender the individual member of the Commonwealth—the citizen—possessed no natural rights at all; but, in exchange for them he acquired such civil rights as the sovereign despot thought fit to grant and to guarantee by the exercise of the whole power of the State, if necessary. Civil law, sanctioned by the force of the community, took the place of "natural right," backed only by the force of the individual. It follows that no limit is, or can be, theoretically set to State interference. The citizen of the "Leviathan" is simply a member of a composite organism controlled by the State will; he has no more freedom in religious matters than in any others; but is to perform the practices of the State religion, and to profess the creed of its theology, whether he likes the one and believes the other, or not. The ideal of the State is a sternly disciplined regiment, in which the citizens are privates, the State functionaries officers, and every action in life is regulated and settled by the sovereign's "Regulations and Instructions." Disobedience is worse than mutiny. For those who disobey need not even be tried by court-martial. By the very act of insubordination they revoke the social contract, and, falling back into the state of nature—that is to say, of the war of each against all—they become aliens, who may be dealt with, summarily, as enemies.

Thus, there are three fundamental points in Hobbes's theory of a polity: First, the primitive state of nature, conceived as a state of war, or unrestricted struggle for existence, among men. Second, the contract, by the execution of which men entered into commonwealths or polities. Third, the complete surrender of all natural rights to the sovereign, and the conferring of absolute and despotic authority upon him, or them, by that contract.

Now, Locke also assumes a primitive state of nature, though its characters are different; he also assumes the con-

tractual origin of the polity; and thus, on these two points, is in general agreement with Hobbes. But, with respect to the third article, he diametrically opposes Hobbes, and declares that the surrender of natural rights which took place when the social compact was made was not complete, but, on the contrary, most strictly and carefully limited.

The difference is of great importance. It marks the point of separation of two schools of *a priori* political philosophy, which have continued to be represented, with constantly increasing divergence, down to the present time, when the ultimate stages of their respective series confront one another as *Anarchy* on the one hand, and *Regimentation* on the other.

But it is necessary to define these epithets with care, before going further. Anarchy, as a term of political philosophy, must be taken only in its proper sense, which has nothing to do with disorder or with crime; but denotes a state of society, in which the rule of each individual by himself is the only government the legitimacy of which is recognised. In this sense, strict anarchy may be the highest conceivable grade of perfection of social existence; for, if all men spontaneously did justice and loved mercy, it is plain that all swords might be advantageously turned into ploughshares, and that the occupation of judges and police would be gone.¹ Anarchy, as thus defined, is the logical outcome of that form of political theory, which for the last half-century and more has been known under the name of *Individualism*.²

¹ "For if men could rule themselves, every man by his own command, that is to say, could they live according to the laws of nature, there would be no need at all of a city, nor of a common coercive power."—Hobbes, *Philosophical Elements*, chap. vi. 13, note.

² It is employed as an already familiar appellative by Louis Blanc in the first volume of his *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, published in 1847, which contains a very interesting attempt to trace the influence of the

I have, unfortunately, no such long established prescription to offer for the term *Regimentation*; but I hope it will be accepted until some one discovers a better denomination for the opposite view, the essence of which is the doctrine of State omnipotence. "Socialism," which at first suggests itself, is unfortunately susceptible of being used in widely different senses. As a general rule, no doubt, socialistic political philosophy is eminently regimental. But there is no necessary connection between socialism and regimentation. Persons, who, of their own free will, should think fit to imitate the primitive Christians depicted by the Acts, and to have all things in common, would be Socialists; and yet they might be none the less Individualists, so long as they refused to compel any one to join them. The only true contradictory of Individualism is that more common kind of Socialism which proposes to use the power of the State in order, as the phrase goes, to "organise" society, or some part of it. That is to say, this "regimental" Socialism proposes to interfere with the freedom of the individual to whatever extent the sovereign may dictate, for the purpose of more or less completely neutralising the effects of the innate inequalities of men. It is militarism in a new shape, requiring the implicit obedience of the individual to a governmental commander-in-chief, whose business is to wage war against natural inequality, and to set artificial equality in its place.

I propose now to give an outline of the progress, first of Regimentation and then of Individualism since the seventeenth century.

In France Regimentation was strongly

principles of authority, of individualism, and of fraternity, through French history. The first volume of the elaborate work of Marlo (Winkelblech), *Organization der Arbeit*, published in 1850, gives a very complete exposition of the theory of Individualism under the name of *Liberalismus*.

advocated by Morelly and by Mably before Rousseau's essay on the Social Contract made its appearance; and, to my mind, except in point of literary form, the works of the former two writers are much better worth reading. But, while the immense popularity of Rousseau made him the apparent leader of the movement in favour of social regimentation, the comparative vagueness of his demands for equality commended him to practical politicians. His works became the gospel of the political—one might almost say the religious—sect of which Robespierre and St. Just were the chiefs;¹ and the famous conspiracy of their would-be continuator, Babœuf, was an attempt to bring about the millennium of eighteenth century socialism by sanguinary violence.

According to Rousseau, the social contract is "the foundation of all rights" (chap. ix.); though the sovereign is not bound by it (chap. vii.), inasmuch as he can enter into no contract with himself. This sovereign is the totality of the citizens. Each, in assenting to the social contract, gives himself and all he possesses to the sovereign (vi.), "*lui et toutes ses forces dont les biens qu'il possède font partie*" (chap. ix.). He loses his natural liberty, and the State becomes master of him and of his goods (chap. ix.). As nature gives a man absolute power over all his members, the social compact gives the polity an absolute power over its citizens. The State,

¹ As Mr. Lecky justly says: "That which distinguishes the French Revolution from other political movements is, that it was directed by men who had adopted certain speculative *a priori* conceptions of political right, with the fanaticism and proselytising fervour of a religious belief, and the Bible of their creed was the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau" (*History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. v. p. 345). I have not undertaken a criticism of Rousseau's various and not unfrequently inconsistent political opinions, as a whole. It was not needful for my purpose to do so; and, if it had been, I could not have improved upon the comprehensive and impartial judgment of our historian of the eighteenth century.

however, does not really despoil him. He gets back civil liberty (that is, such amount of liberty as the State decrees) and a right of property in that which he possesses (chap. viii.). His previous possession, which was bare usurpation, is thus changed into right. In this way members of the community become mere depositaries of the public property, the private right of ownership being subordinate to the supreme right of the community (chap. ix.). The general will is the source of authority; whoever refuses to obey its behests is to be coerced into obedience by the whole body—"which means nothing more than that he shall be forced to be free" (chap. vii.). As will be seen on turning to the extracts from the "Philosophical Rudiments" given above (p. 110, *note*), most of this is Hobbism pure and simple. The fundamental principle of the Rousseauite, as of the Hobbist, polity is the omnipotence of the State; its boasted liberty is a grant from the sovereign despot, whose absolutism is sugared over by the suggestion that each man has an infinitesimal share in it. And, if any one of the sovereign people should be as blind to the benefits of this sort of free bondsmanship and coerced brotherly love as the "Needy knifegrinder" was, his "incivism" is to be cured by physical treatment: "*On le forcera d'être libre.*"

The despotism of the "general will" (*volonté générale*) being thus established, how is the sovereign to make his commands known? This is a point about which it is surely necessary to be very clear. Unfortunately, Rousseau leaves it not a little obscure. He commences the second chapter of his second book by declaring that the general will is that of the body of the people; that, as such, the declaration of it is an act of sovereignty, while the declaration of the will of a part of the people is merely an act of administration. Yet, in a note, we are told that for the "will" to be "general" it need not be unanimous, only all the votes must be taken. How

the expression of will which is not unanimous can be other than that of a part of the people, does not appear. But full light is thrown upon Rousseau's real meaning in the second chapter of the fourth book. Following Locke's dictum that nothing can make a man a member of a commonwealth "but his actually entering into it by positive engagement and express promise and compact" ("Civil Government," § 122), he tells us that

the only law which, by its nature, requires unanimous assent, is the social compact: for civil association is the most voluntary of all acts: every man being born free and master of himself, no one, under any pretext whatever, can subject himself without avowal of the act.

Those who do not assent when the social contract is made remain strangers among the citizens; but after the State is constituted, residence within its bounds is to be taken as assent to the contract.

Outside this primitive contract, the vote of the majority obliges the test; that is a consequence of the contract itself.

In the Rousseauite State, then, sovereignty means neither more nor less than the omnipotence of a bare majority of voices of all the members of the State collected together in general meetings (chaps. xii.—xiv.).

During the sittings of this sovereign multitude, which are to take place at fixed intervals,

the jurisdiction of the government ceases, the executive power is suspended, and the person of the lowliest citizen is as sacred and inviolable as that of the highest magistrate; for where the represented is present the representative ceases to exist.

In fact, in each of these periodical meetings, the polity potentially returns to the state of nature, and its members, if they please, may dissolve the social contract altogether: if they do not so please, they reappoint office-bearers to do the work assigned to them, whatever that may be (iii. chap. xvii.), until the next

assembly. Society is thus a sort of joint-stock company, whose officers vacate their posts at every general meeting, and whose shareholders can wind up the concern, or go on, as the assembly may resolve, with such articles of association as a bare majority of the shareholders may determine shall be binding until the next meeting. An industrial company organised in this way would probably soon resign sovereignty to a liquidator. But then the members of industrial associations certainly do not undergo that transfiguration which, according to Rousseau, is worked by entrance into the social contract. "The general will," says he, "is always upright and always tends towards the general good" (liv. ii. chap. iii.); "the people are never corrupted" (*ibid.*); "all constantly desire the happiness of each" (liv. ii. chap. iv.).

Unfortunately, the intellect and the information of the sovereign are not always quite up to the standard of his morality:—

The general will is always just; but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened (liv. ii. chap. vi.).

It would seem that flattery of the sovereign is not peculiar to monarchies. Notoriously, kings can do no wrong, and always spend their lives in sighing for the welfare of their subjects. If they seem to err, it is only because they are misled and misinformed. That has been the great make-believe of apologists for despotism from all time.

A properly enlightened sovereign people, with its incorruptible altruism, can never lose sight of the true end of legislation, the greatest good of all; and if we seek to know what that is, Rousseau tells us that it embraces two things, Liberty and Equality (liv. ii. chap. xi.). Liberty, he says, is "obedience to the law which one has laid down for oneself" (liv. i. chap. viii.); a well-sounding definition. But to my mind it is somewhat hard to reconcile with the obligation to submit to laws laid down by other people

who happen to be in a majority. Unless, indeed, this "law which one has laid down for oneself" simply inculcates obedience to the majority. But, if that be liberty, then liberty is no less possessed by the man who makes it a law to himself to obey any master; and liberty is as fully possessed by the slave who makes up his mind to be a slave, as by the freest of free men.

With respect to the other aim of government, the maintenance of equality, Rousseau makes an instructive statement in answering the objection that the attempt is chimerical.

It is precisely because the nature of things (*force des choses*) continually tends to the destruction of equality, that the power of legislation ought always to tend to maintain it.¹

Absolute equality of power and wealth is not required, but neither opulence nor beggary is to be permitted; and it is to

¹ In spite of all his sentimentalism, Rousseau occasionally sees straight into the realities of things. *A prendre le terme dans la rigueur de l'acception, il n'a jamais existé de véritable démocratie, et il n'en existera jamais. Il est contre l'ordre naturel que le grand nombre gouverne, et que le petit soit gouverné. . . . S'il y avait un peuple de dieux il se gouvernerait démocratiquement. Un gouvernement si parfait ne convient pas à des hommes* (liv. iii. chap. v.). "A second Daniel come to judgment!" For it would not be far from the truth to say that the only form of government which has ever permanently existed is *oligarchy*. A very strong despot, or a furious multitude, may, for a brief space, work their single or collective will; but the power of an absolute monarch is, as a rule, as much in the hands of a ring of ministers, mistresses, and priests, as that of Demos is, in reality, wielded by a ring of orators and wire-pullers. As Hobbes has pithily put the case, "A democracy in effect is no more than an aristocracy of orators, interrupted sometimes with the temporary monarchy of one orator" (*De Corpore Politico*, chap. ii. 5). The alternative of dominion does not lie between a sovereign individual and a sovereign multitude, but between an aristarchy and a demarchy, that is to say, between an aristocratic and a democratic oligarchy. The chief business of the aristarchy is to persuade the king, emperor, or czar, that he wants to go the way they wish him to go; that of the demarchy is to do the like with the mob.

depend upon the legislators' view of the circumstances whether the community shall devote itself to agriculture or to manufactures and commerce (liv. ii. chap. xi.). Thus the State is to control distribution no less than production.

Moreover, the sovereign people is to settle the articles of a State religion, not exactly as religious dogmas, but as "sentiments of sociability without which a man can neither be a good citizen nor a faithful subject":—

Without being able to oblige any one to believe them, he may banish from the State whoever does not believe them; he may banish them, not for impiety, but for unsociability—as persons incapable of sincerely loving the laws or justice, and of sacrificing themselves to duty if needful. . . . If any one, after having acknowledged these same dogmas, conducts himself as if he did not believe them, let him be punished with death: he has committed the greatest of crimes, he has lied before the law (liv. iv. chap. viii.).

The articles or the State creed are: the existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, foreseeing and provident Deity; the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and of the law. These are the positive doctrines of the Rousseauite creed. Of negative dogmas there is only one, and the reader may be surprised to learn that it enjoins the repression of intolerance. Having banished unbelievers in the State creed and put to death lapsed believers, Rousseau thanks God that he is not as those publicans, the devotees of "les cultes que nous avons exclus"—intolerant. Does he not proclaim that all religions which tolerate others should themselves be tolerated? Yet the qualificatory provision, "so far as their dogmas are in no way contrary to the duties of the citizen," would seem to effect a considerable reduction in the State toleration of the tolerators; since, as we have just seen, it is obligatory on the citizen to profess the State creed.

Whether Rousseau used the works of Morelly and of Mably, as he did those

of Hobbes and Locke, and whether his reputation for political originality is not of that cheap and easy sort which is won by sedulously ignoring those who have been unmannerly enough to anticipate us, need not be discussed. At any rate, important works of both these authors, in which the principles to be found in the essay on the "Social Contract" are made the foundation of complete schemes of regimental socialism, with community of goods, were published earlier than that essay. Robespierre and St. Just went as far as Rousseau in the direction of enforcing equality, but they left it to Babœuf to try to go as far as Mably. In their methods of endeavouring (by the help of the guillotine) to "force men to be free," they supplied the works naturally brought forth by the Rousseauite faith. And still more were they obedient to the master in insisting on a State religion, and in certifying the existence of God by a governmental decree.

The regimental Socialists of our own time appear to believe that, in their hands, political regimentation has taken a new departure, and substantially differs from that of the older apostles of their creed. Certainly they diverge from the views of Owen or of Fourier; but I can find nothing of importance in the serious writings of the modern school, nor even in their romances, which may not be discovered in the works of Morelly and of Mably, whose advocacy of the doctrines that several ownership is the root of all the evils of society; that the golden age would return if only the State directed production and regulated consumption; and that the love of approbation affords a stimulus to industry, sufficient to replace all those furnished by the love of power, of wealth and of sensual gratification, in our present imperfect state, is as powerful as that of any later writers.

We may now turn to the other line of

development of political philosophy based upon *a priori* arguments, which is represented by individualism in various shades of intensity. I have already said that the founder and father of political individualism, as it is held by its more moderate adherents at the present day, is John Locke; and that his primary assumptions—the state of nature and the contractual basis of society—are the same as those of his predecessor Hobbes, and of his successors Rousseau and Mably. But I have also remarked that the condition of men in the state of nature, imagined by Locke, is different from that assumed by either Hobbes or Rousseau. For these last philosophers, primitive man was a savage; lawless and ferocious according to the older, good and stupid, according to the younger, theorist. Locke's fancy picture of primitive men, on the other hand, represents them under the guise of highly intelligent and respectable persons, "living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth, with authority to judge between them" ("Civil Government," § 19).

The Law of Nature¹ is, in fact, the law dictated by reason, which "teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, liberty, or possessions." Elsewhere (§ 4), the state of nature is defined as a state of "perfect freedom," in which men "dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit"; and further as a state of equality,

wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another;

¹ This view of the law of nature comes from the jurists. Hobbes defines it in the same way, but he says that, in the state of nature, the Law of Nature is silent. In speaking of Locke as the founder and father of Individualism, I do not forget that Hooker (to whom Locke often refers), and still earlier writers, have expressed individualistic opinions. Nevertheless, I believe that modern individualism is essentially Locke's work.

there being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature,¹ and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection.

Again (§ 7), since the law of nature "willeth the peace and preservation of all mankind," every man has a "right to punish the transgressors of that law"; that is to say, those who invade the rights of others. Moreover, truth and the keeping of faith are commands of the Law of Nature, and belong "to men as men," and not as members of society (§ 14). Locke uses the term Law of Nature, therefore, in the sense in which it was often (perhaps generally) employed by the jurists, to denote a system of equity based on purely rational considerations.

There is no connection between this law of nature and "natural rights," properly so called. The state of nature imagined by Locke is, in fact, the individualistic golden age of philosophical

¹ Yet Locke, of course, knows well enough that children are not born equal and that adults are extremely unequal. All that he really means is that men have an "equal right to natural freedom," and that is a mere *a priori* dictum (§ 54-87). The sceptics as to the reality of the state of nature are treated with some contempt (§ 14). "It is often asked as a weighty objection, Where are, or ever were there, any such men in a state of nature? To which it may suffice as an answer at present, that since all princes and rulers of independent governments, all through the world, are in a state of nature, it is plain that the world never was, or ever will be, without numbers of men in that state. I have named all governors of independent communities, whether they are or are not in league with others, for it is not every compact that puts an end to the state of nature between men, but only this one of agreeing together mutually to enter into one community and make one body politic; other promises and compacts men may make with one another, and yet still be in the state of nature. The promises and bargains for truck, &c., between the two men in the desert island mentioned by Garcilasso de la Vega, in his *History of Peru*, or between a Swiss and an Indian, in the woods of America, are binding to them though they are perfectly in a state of nature, in reference to one another: for truth and keeping of faith belongs to men as men, and not as members of society."

anarchy, in which all men voluntarily rendering *suum cuique*, there is no need of any agency for the enforcement of justice. While Hobbes supposes that, in the state of nature, the Law of Nature was silent, Locke seems to imagine that it spoke loudly enough, but that men grew deaf to it. It was only in consequence of the failure of some of them to maintain the original standard of ethical elevation that those inconveniences arose which drove the rest to combine into commonwealths; to choose rulers; and to endow them, as delegates of all, with the sum of the right to punish transgressors inherent in each.

In taking this important step, however, our forefathers exhibited that caution and prudence which might be expected from persons who dwelt upon the ethical heights which they had reached in the state of nature. Instead of making a complete surrender of all the rights and powers which they possessed in that state, to the Sovereign, and thus creating State omnipotence by the social contract, as Hobbes wrongfully declared them to have done, they gave up only just so much of them as was absolutely necessary for the purposes of an executive with strictly limited powers. With the Stuarts recognised by France, and hosts of Jacobite pamphleteers on the look-out for every coign of vantage, it would never do to admit the Hobbesian doctrine of complete surrender. So Locke is careful to assert that when men entered into commonwealths they must have stipulated (and, therefore, on approved *a priori* principles, did stipulate) that the power of the Sovereign was strictly limited to the performance of acts needful "to secure every one's property."

§ 131. But though men, when they enter into society, give up the equality, liberty, and executive power they had in the state of nature, into the hands of the society to be so far disposed of by the legislative, as the good of society shall require; yet it being only with an intention in every one the better to preserve himself, his liberty and property; (for no rational creature can be supposed to change his condition with an

intention to be worse), the power of the society, or legislative constituted by them, can never be supposed to extend farther, than the common good; but is obliged to secure every one's property by providing against those three defects above mentioned, that made the state of nature so unsafe and uneasy.¹

To listen to Locke, one would imagine that a general meeting of men living in the state of nature having been called to consider the "defects" of their condition, and somebody being voted to the tree (in the presumable absence of chairs), this earliest example of a constituent assembly resolved to form a governmental company, with strictly limited liability, for the purpose of defending liberty and property; and that they elected a director or body of directors, to be known as the Sovereign, for the purpose of carrying on that business and no other whatsoever. Thus we are a long way from the absolute Sovereign of Hobbes. Here is the point, in fact, at which Locke diverged from the older philosopher; and at which Rousseau and Mably, after profiting as much as they could by Locke's "Essays," left him and laid the theoretical foundations of regimental socialism.

The physiocrats of the eighteenth century, struggling against the effects of that "fureur de gouverner," which one of their leaders, the elder Mirabeau, called the worst malady of modern states, and which had nearly succeeded in strangling every branch of French industry and starving the French people, necessarily welcomed and adopted

¹ The following passages complete the expression of Locke's meaning: "Political power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently of all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good" (§ 3). "Government has no other end than the preservation of property" (§ 94). "The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property" (§ 124).

Locke's individualistic formula. Their favourite maxim of "Laissez faire" was a corollary of the application of that formula in the sphere of economy; and it was a great thing for them to be able to add to the arguments based on practical expediency, which could be properly appreciated only by those who took pains to learn something about the facts of the case, the authority of a deduction from one of those *a priori* truths, the just appreciation of which is supposed to come by nature to all men. The axiom of absolute ethics in question has been stated in many ways. It is laid down that every man has a right to do as he pleases, so long as he does no harm to others; or that he is free to do anything he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the same freedom in others. Daire, in the introduction to his "Physiocrates" (p. 16), goes so far as to call the rule thus enunciated a "law of nature."

La loi naturelle qui permet à chacun de faire tout ce qui lui est avantageux sous la seule condition de ne pas nuire à autrui.²

The physiocrats accepted the dogma of human equality, and they further agreed with Locke in considering that the restriction of the functions of the Government to the protection of liberty and property was in nowise inconsistent with furtherance of education by the State. On the contrary, they considered

² The oldest recorded form of the rule, and that which has the most positive character, is contained in the command of the Jewish law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus xix. 18) (neighbour including "stranger that dwelleth with you," v. 34), which stands in the same relation to the individualistic maxim as Fraternity to Equity. The strength of Judaism as a social organisation has resided in its unflinching advocacy of freedom, within the law; equality, before the law; and fraternity, outside the law. I am not sure that from the purely philosophical point of view, the form in which that great Jew, Spinoza, has stated the rule is not the best: "Desire nothing for yourself which you do not desire for others" (*nihil sibi appetere quod reliquis hominibus non cupiant*). (*Ethics*, iv. xviii.)

education to be an essential condition of the only equality which is consistent with liberty. Moreover, they laid great stress on the proposition that justice is inseparably connected with property and liberty. Nothing can be stronger than the words of Quesnay on this point:—

Là où les lois et la puissance tutélaire n'assurent point la propriété et la liberté, il n'y a ni gouvernement ni société profitables ; il n'y a que domination et anarchie sous les apparences d'un gouvernement ; les lois positives et la domination y protègent et assurent les usurpations des forts, et anéantissent la propriété et la liberté des faibles.¹

That is to say, the absolute political ethics of the individualist leave as little doubt in his mind that private property and the right to deal freely with it are essential to the protection of the weak against the strong, as the absolute political ethics of the regimental socialist assure him that private property and freedom of contract involve the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

Through the widespread influence of the "Wealth of Nations," individualism became a potent factor in practical politics. Wherever the principles of free-trade prevailed and were followed by industrial prosperity, individualism acquired a solid fulcrum from which to move the political world. Liberalism tended to the adoption of Locke's definition of the limits of State action, and to consider persistence in letting alone as a definition of the whole duty of the statesman. But in the hands of even the most liberal governments, these limits proved pretty elastic ; and, however objectionable State interference might be, it was found hard to set bounds to it, if indirect as well as direct interference were permissible. So long ago as the end of the eighteenth century, the distinguished scholar and statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt² attempted to meet this diffi-

culty. He wrote a special treatise, which remained unpublished till sixty years later, for the purpose of showing that the legitimate functions of the State are negative ; and that governments have no right to take any positive steps for the promotion of the welfare of the governed. Von Humboldt does not encumber himself with Locke's "limited contract," but starts an *a priori* axiom of his own, namely:—

That reason cannot desire for any man any other condition than that in which each individual not only enjoys the most absolute freedom of developing himself by his own energies in his perfect individuality, but in which external nature even is left unfashioned by any human agency, but only receives the impress given to it by each individual by himself and his own free will, according to the measure of his wants and instincts, and restricted only by the limits of his powers and rights (p. 18).

From this very considerable assumption (which I must say does not appear to me to possess the quality of intuitive certainty) the conclusion is deduced that

the State is to abstain from all solicitude for the positive welfare of the citizens and not to proceed a step farther than is necessary for their mutual security and protection against foreign enemies ; for with no other object should it impose restrictions on freedom.

This conclusion differs but little from that of Locke, verbally. Nevertheless in its practical application, Von Humboldt excludes not only all and every matter of religion, of morals, and of education, but the relations of the sexes, and all private actions not injurious to other citizens, from the interference of the State. However, he permits governmental regulation of the power of testamentary devolution ; and (though somewhat unwillingly) interference with acts which are not immediately hurtful to one's neighbours, yet the

the auspices of Schiller) until 1852, when the treatise formed part of the posthumous edition of Von Humboldt's works. A translation under the title of *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, was published in 1854, by Dr. Chapman (then, as now [1890], the editor of the *Westminster Review*), and became very well known in this country.

¹ *Droit Naturel*, chap. 5.

² Von Humboldt's essay was written in 1791 ; but views so little likely to be relished by the German governments of that day needed cautious enunciation, and only fragments appeared (under

obvious tendencies of which are to damage them or to restrict their liberties.

By far the best and fullest exposition known to me of the individualism which, in principle, goes no further than Locke's formula, is Dunoyer's "*Liberté du Travail*" of which the first volume was published in 1825, and the whole work in 1845. One great merit of the author is the resolute casting aside all the *a priori* figments of his predecessors; and another lies in his careful and elaborate discussion of the historical growth of Individualism, which goes a long way towards the establishment of the conclusion, that advance in civilisation and restriction of the sphere of Government interference have gone hand in hand. J. S. Mill has referred to Dunoyer's work; but later expositors of Individualism ignore him completely, although they have produced nothing comparable to the weighty case for the restriction of the sphere of government, presented with a force which is not weakened by fanaticism, in the seventh chapter of the ninth book of Dunoyer's work.

The year 1845 is further marked in the annals of Individualism by the appearance of Stirner's "*The Individual and his Property*,"¹ in which the author, going back to first principles, after a ruthless criticism of both limited Individualism and regimental Socialism, declares himself for unlimited Individualism; that is to say, Anarchy. Stirner justly points out that "natural right" is nothing but natural might. Man, in the state of nature, could know of no reason why he should not freely use his powers to satisfy his desires. When men entered into society they were impelled by self-interest. Each thought he could procure some good for himself by that proceeding; and his natural right to make the most out of the

situation remained intact. The theory of an express contract, with either complete or incomplete surrender of natural rights, is an empty figment, nor was there any understanding, except perhaps that each would grasp as much as he could reasonably expect to keep. According to this development of Individualism, therefore, the state of nature is not really put an end to by the formation of a polity; the struggle for existence is as severe as ever though its conditions are somewhat different. It is a state of war; but instead of the methods of the savage, who sticks at no treachery, and revels in wanton destruction, we have those of modern warfare, with its Red Cross ambulances, flags of truce strictly respected, and extermination conducted with all the delicate courtesies of chivalry. The rules of this refined militancy are called laws, and prudence dictates respect for them because, as it is to the advantage of the majority that they should be observed, the many have agreed to fall upon any one who breaks them; and the many are stronger than the one. Thus the sole sanction of law being the will of the majority, which is a mere name for a draft upon physical force, certain to be honoured in case of necessity; and "absolute political ethics" teaching us that force can confer no rights; it is plain that state-compulsion involves the citizen in slavery, as completely as if any other master were the compeller. Wherever and whenever the individual man is forced to submit to any rules, except those which he himself spontaneously recognises to be worthy of observance, there liberty is absent. And thus we arrive at the position of the great apostle of anarchy, Bakounine, according to whom the liberty of man consists solely in this: that "he pays obedience to natural laws, because *he himself* admits them to be such, and not because they have been imposed upon him from without by any other will, whether divine or

¹ *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, by Max Stirner. I follow the account of the contents of the book given by Meyer, *Der Emancipationskampf des vierten Standes* (Ed. 2, 1882, pp. 36-44).

human, collective or individual.”¹ Hence it follows that the “sovereign people” worshipped by the great champions of liberty and equality, when it dares to impose the “general will” upon the individual, even if that person be in a minority of one, is as brutal a usurper as ever exercised monarchical tyranny; and, whether a man shall so much as recognise the right of another to the freedom which he himself exercises, is to be left to his private judgment. As all property is robbery, so is all government from without, tyranny.

In this country, where the influence of the pedantry of the Absolute is so much trammelled by common sense and more or less experience of the difference between the nature of things and *a priori* assumptions, Individualism has, usually, stopped short of the conclusions of Stirner and of Bakounine, beyond which, so far as I can see, the *a priori* method can hardly carry its most hardened practitioner. Nevertheless, the “party of Individual Liberty,” of which Mr. Auberon Herbert is the spokesman, must, I think, be classified as Anarchist;² though the definition of their conception of the relations of the individual to government looks, at first sight, as if it meant no more than limited Individualism.

Each man and woman are to be free to direct their faculties and their energies according to their own sense of what is right and wise, in every direction except one. They are not to use their faculties for the purpose of forcibly restraining their neighbour from the same free use of his faculties.³

¹ *Dieu et l'Etat*, 1881.

² Let me remind the reader that I use “anarchy” in its philosophical sense. Heaven forbid that I should be supposed to suggest that Mr. Herbert and his friends have the remotest connection with those too “absolute” political philosophers who desire to add the force of dynamite to that of persuasion. It would be as reasonable to connect Monarchists with murder, on the strength of the proceedings of a Philip the Second, or a Lewis the Fourteenth.

³ *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State*, 1885.

And as to Governments—

They must simply defend the person and property of all persons by whomsoever they are assailed.⁴

This, it will be observed, is the dictum of Locke and nothing more.

But, in the application of the theory to practice, Mr. Herbert goes a good deal further than even Humboldt or Dunoyer. He would do away with all enforced taxation and levying of duties, and trust to voluntary payments for the revenue of the State. The relations of the sexes and the disposition of property by will are to be quite free; traffic of all kinds is to be released from restrictions; state inspection is to be abolished, no less than all hygienic regulations; state education goes, as a matter of course, and with it all state-aided museums, libraries, galleries of art, parks, and pleasure grounds. In fact, the functions of government within the State are rigidly restricted to the administration of civil and criminal justice.

But this is not all. Mr. Herbert oversteps the bounds of limited Individualism and enters the region of Anarchy, when he says he is not quite sure that even this pittance of administrative power is strictly justifiable.

I do not think that it is possible to find a perfect moral foundation for the authority of any Government, be it the Government of an emperor or a Republic. They are all of the nature of an usurpation, though I think, when *confined within certain exact limits*, of a justifiable usurpation.⁵

A “justifiable usurpation” is something which I can no more conceive than I can imagine a round square; it being the nature of usurpation, as I imagine, to be unjustifiable. But I presume that what is meant is, that, though government has no moral authority, it is practically expedient that it should be permitted to exist, if confined within very narrow limits. Absolute ethics, in Mr. Herbert’s opinion, refuses to

⁴ *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State*, 1885, p. 33.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 22.

acknowledge the right of any government except the government of the individual by himself. Therefore I am unable to discern any logical boundary between Mr. Herbert's position and that of Bakounine.

The fact that Individualism, pushed to its logical extreme, must end in philosophical anarchy, has not escaped that acute thinker and vigorous writer, Mr. Donisthorpe, whose work on "Individualism"¹ is at once piquant, learned, and thoroughgoing—qualities in which the writings of speculative philosophers do not always abound. I commend Mr. Donisthorpe's eighth chapter, entitled "A Word for Anarchy," to those who desire to understand whither the Individualist principle, stripped bare of *a priori* fogs and formulas, and followed out to its consequences, lands its supporters.

Starting from assumptions about the equality of men, their natural rights and the social contract, common to so many political philosophers of the *a priori* school, we have been offered the choice of two alternative routes. Taking that indicated by Hobbes, Rousseau, Mably, and their successors, we have found ourselves committed to the further *a priori* assumption that, when men entered into society, they surrendered all their natural rights; and, acknowledging the omnipotence of the general will, received back such legal and moral obligations and permissions as the Sovereign might be pleased to sanction. Absolute political ethics thus arrived, by a plausible logical process, at *Regimentation*; that is, a quasi-military organisation of society, for the purpose of conquering the general welfare by means of that enforced apparent equality which brings about the hugest of real inequalities.

On the other hand, when we took the path pointed out by Locke and followed by Liberalism, we made an *a priori* assumption of a diametrically

opposite character. We said that men entering into the social contract reserved all their natural rights, except such as it was absolutely necessary to yield to government, in order that it should exercise its only legitimate function, the defence of the liberty and property of the individual. According to this limited individualist view, the business of government (except in relation to external enemies) is negative; it is to interfere only for the purpose of preventing any one citizen from using his liberty in such a way as to interfere with the equal liberty of another citizen. According to the regimentalist view, on the contrary, the business of government is not only negative, but also and eminently positive. It is the duty of the State to interfere for the purpose of promoting the welfare of society (of which equality is supposed to be a necessary condition), however much such interference may restrict individual liberty. The final outcome of Regimentation is seen in those extreme forms of regimental Socialism which undertake to regulate not only production and consumption, but every detail of human life; that of Individualism is Anarchy, which abolishes collective government and trusts to the struggle for existence, modified by such ethical and intellectual considerations as may be freely recognised by the individual, for the establishment of a social *modus vivendi*, in which freedom remains intact, except so far as it may be voluntarily limited.

Granting the premisses, I am unable to see that one of these lines of argument is any better than the other; and they are mutually destructive. But suppose that, not being blinded by any *a priori* cataclysms, we use our eyes upon these premisses—what utter shams and delusions they show themselves to be! I hope that no more need be said about natural rights and the equality of men. But there is just as little foundation in fact for the social contract and either the limited, or the unlimited, devolution of rights and powers which is supposed to

¹ *Individualism: a System of Politics*, 1889.

have been effected by it. We have sadly little definite knowledge of the manner in which polities arose, but if anything is certain, it is that the notion of a contract whether expressed or implied, is by no means an adequate expression of the process.

The most archaic polities of which we have any definite record are either families, or federations of families; and the most doctrinaire of political philosophers will hardly be prepared to maintain that the family polity was based upon contract between the *paterfamilias* and his wife and children, and arose out of the expressed desire of the latter to have their liberty and property protected by their governor; or that even any tacit understanding on that subject influenced the formation of the family group. In truth, the more primitive the condition of a polity, the less is there of a contract, either expressed or implied, between its members—the more common is it to find that neither wife nor child possessed either liberty, or property, worth speaking of. The *paterfamilias* of the Aryan stock, at any rate, could say “L’état c’est moi” with more truth than any later monarch. So far from the preservation of liberty and property and the securing of equal rights being the chief and most conspicuous objects aimed at by the archaic polities of which we know anything, it would be a good deal nearer the truth to say that they were federated absolute monarchies, the chief purpose of which was the maintenance of an established Church for the worship of the family ancestors.

Philosophers, proud of living according to reason, are too apt to forget that people who do not profess themselves to be more than ordinary men mostly live according to unreason; or what seems such to the philosophers. Moderns, who make to themselves metaphysical teraphim out of the Absolute, the Unknowable, the Unconscious, and the other verbal abstractions whose apotheosis is indicated by initial capitals, may

find it difficult to imagine that it seemed good to ancient men to perform the same theurgic operation upon their very concrete but deceased forefathers; and to believe that, unless the Manes were regularly propitiated with a supply of such commodities as ghosts can enjoy, they would not only withdraw their benevolent protection, but would make things very unpleasant for their descendants and their fellow countrymen. Yet there can be little question that this theory lies at the foundation of the ancient polity; and that the dominant purpose of its organisation was not the preservation of liberty or property, by taking order that no man used his freedom in a way to interfere with others’ freedom, but the performance of those religious obligations by which the good will of the ancestral gods might be secured. Archaic society aims, not at the freest possible exercise of rights, but at the exactest possible discharge of duties. The most marked inequalities and seeming iniquities of ancient law, such as succession in the male line, the acknowledgment of agnate blood relationship only, adoption, divorce for barrenness, are direct consequences of the religious foundation of ancient society. Thus the whole fabric of *a priori* political speculation which we have had under consideration is built upon the quicksand of fictitious history. So far as this method of establishing their claims is concerned, *Regimentation* and *Individualism*—enforced Socialism and Anarchy—are alike out of court.

The comments upon the preceding essays which have come under my notice, lead me to suspect that my purpose in writing them has been somewhat misunderstood.

They appear to have been regarded by the regimental socialists as an onslaught specially directed against their position; and as an attempt to justify those who, content with the present, are

opposed to all endeavours to bring about any fundamental change in our social arrangements.

Those who have had the patience to follow me to the end will, I trust, have become aware that my aim has been altogether different. Even the best of modern civilisations appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy ideal nor even possesses the merit of stability. I do not hesitate to express the opinion, that, if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over Nature which is its consequence, and the wealth which follows upon that dominion, are to make no difference in the extent and the intensity of Want, with its concomitant physical and moral degradation, among the masses of the people, I should hail the advent of some kindly comet, which would sweep the whole affair away, as a desirable consummation. What profits it to the human Prometheus that he has stolen the fire of heaven to be his servant, and that the spirits of the earth and of the air obey him, if the vulture of pauperism is eternally to tear his very vitals and keep him on the brink of destruction?

Assuredly, if I believed that any of the schemes hitherto proposed for bringing about social amelioration were likely to attain their end, I should think what remains to me of life well spent in furthering it. But my interest in these questions did not begin the day before yesterday; and, whether right or wrong, it is no hasty conclusion of mine that we have small chance of doing wisely in this matter (or indeed in any other), unless we think rightly. Further, that we shall never think rightly in politics until we have cleared our minds of delusions; and, more especially, of the philosophical delusions which, as I have endeavoured to show, have infested political thought for centuries. My main purpose

has been to contribute my mite towards this essential preliminary operation. Ground must be cleared and levelled before a building can be properly commenced; the labour of the navvy is as necessary as that of the architect, however much less honoured; and it has been my humble endeavour to grub up those old stumps of the *a priori*, which stand in the way of the very foundations of a sane political philosophy. To those who think that questions of the kind I have been discussing have merely an academic interest, let me suggest, once more, that a century ago Robespierre and St. Just proved that the way of answering them may have extremely practical consequences.

The task which I set before myself, then, was simply a destructive criticism of *a priori* political philosophy, whether regimental or individualistic. But I am aware that the modesty of the purely critical attitude is not appreciated as it ought to be. There is a prevalent idea that the constructive genius is in itself something grander than the critical, even though the former turns out to have merely made a symmetrical rubbish heap in the middle of the road of science, which the latter has to clear away before anybody can get forward. The critic is told: It is all very well to show that this, that, or the other is wrong; what we want to know is, what is right?

Now, I submit that it is unjust to require a crossing sweeper in Piccadilly to tell you the road to Highgate; he has earned his copper if he has done all he professes to do and cleaned up your immediate path. So I do not think any one has a claim upon me to make any positive suggestions, still less to commit myself to any ambitious schemes of social regeneration such as are now as common as blackberries. Reading and experience have led me to believe that the results of political changes are hardly ever those which their friends hope or their foes fear; and, if I were offered a free hand by

Almighty power, I should, like Hamlet, shudderingly object to the responsibility of attempting to set right a world out of joint. But I may perhaps, without presumption, set forth some reflections, germane to the subject, which have now and again crossed my mind.

About this question of government, for example; perhaps it is the prejudice of scientific habit, which leads me to think that it might be as well to proceed from the known to the unknown. Most of us, I hope, have tried their hands at self-government; and those who have met with any measure of success in that difficult art will, I believe, agree with me that safety lies neither in the regimentation of asceticism nor in the anarchy of reckless self-seeking, but in a middle course. Surely there is a time to submit to guidance and a time to take one's own way at all hazards.

A good many of us, again, have had practical experience of the government of that elementary polity, a family. In this business, the people who fail utterly are, on the one hand, the martinet regimentalists and, on the other, the parents whose theory of education appears to be that expounded by the elder Mr. Weller, when, if I remember rightly, he enlarged upon the advantages which Sam had enjoyed by being allowed to roam at will about Covent Garden Market, from babyhood upwards. Individualism, pushed to anarchy, in the family is as ill-founded theoretically and as mischievous practically as it is in the State; while extreme regimentation is a certain means of either destroying self-reliance or of maddening to rebellion.

When we turn from the family to the aggregation of families which constitutes the State, I do not see that the case is substantially altered. The problem of government may be stated to be, What ought to be done and what to be left undone by society, as a whole, in order to bring about as much welfare of

its members as is compatible with the natural order of things? and I do not think men will ever solve this problem unless they clear their minds, not merely of the notion that it can be solved *a priori*; but unless they face the fact that the natural order of things—the order, that is to say, as unmodified by human effort—does not tend to bring about what we understand as welfare. On the contrary, the natural order tends to the maintenance, in one shape or another, of the war of each against all, the result of which is not the survival of the morally or even the physically highest, but of that form of humanity, the mortality of which is least under the conditions. The pressure of a constant increase of population upon the means of support must keep up the struggle for existence, whatever form of social organisation may be adopted. In fact, it is hard to say whether the state of anarchy or that of extreme regimentation would be the more rapidly effective in bringing any society which multiplies without limit to a crisis.

The cardinal defect of all socialistic schemes appears to me to be, that they either ignore this difficulty or try to evade it by nonsensical suppositions about increasing the production of vital capital¹ *ad libitum*. Individualism, on the other hand, admitting the inevitability of the struggle, is too apt to try to persuade us that it is all for our good, as an essential condition of progress to higher things. But that is not necessarily true; the creature that survives a free-fight only demonstrates his superior fitness for coping with free-fighters—not any other kind of superiority.

The political problem of problems is how to deal with over-population, and it faces us on all sides. I have heard a great deal about the tyranny of capital. No doubt it is true that labour is

¹ The term "vital capital" is defined in an essay on "Capital and Labour" published in *The Nineteenth Century* (1890). [See "Collected Essays," ix. p. 147.]

dependent on capital. No doubt if, out of a thousand men, one holds and can keep all the capital,¹ the rest are bound to serve him or die. But if, on this ground, labour may be said to be the slave of capital, it would be equally just to say that capital is the slave of labour. A naked millionaire, with a chest full of specie, might be set down in the middle of the best agricultural estate in England; but unless somebody would work for him, he would probably soon perish from cold and hunger, having previously lost everything for lack of protection. The state of things attributed to the tyranny of the capitalist might be far more properly ascribed to the self-enslavement of the wage earners. It is their competition with one another which makes his strength.

Over-population has two sources: one internal by generation, one external by immigration. Theoretically, the elimination of Want is possible by the arrest of both, in such a manner as to restrict the population of any area to the number capable of being fed by the agricultural produce of that area; the manufacturing and professional population being kept down to a number equal to the difference

between the necessary agricultural and the total permissible population. A polity of this kind might be self-supporting, and there need be no poverty in it, except such as arose from moral delinquencies or unavoidable calamities.

This is, substantially, the plan of the "Closed Industrial State"² set forth by Fichte; and, so far as I can see, there is no other social arrangement by which Want can be permanently eliminated. For if either unrestricted generation or unrestricted immigration is permitted; or if any considerable proportion of the industrial population is allowed to depend for its food upon foreign sources, pauperism becomes imminent—in the first case, by the competition of the native and the imported workers with one another; in the second case, by the competition in the market of foreign industries of the same nature.

I offer no opinion whether Fichte's Utopia is practically realisable or not. That about which I have a very strong opinion is, that political speculators who, while ignoring these conditions, promise a millennium of equality and fraternity, are reckoning sadly without their host, or rather hostess, Dame Nature.

¹ Using the term in its more restricted sense.

² *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*, 1800.

THE END

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

BY

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I WAS born about eight o'clock in the morning on the 4th of May, 1825, at Ealing, which was, at that time, as quiet a little country village as could be found within half-a-dozen miles of Hyde Park Corner. Now it is a suburb of London with, I believe, 30,000 inhabitants. My father was one of the masters in a large semi-public school which at one time had a high reputation. I am not aware that any portents preceded my arrival in this world, but, in my childhood, I remember hearing a traditional account of the manner in which I lost the chance of an endowment of great practical value. The windows of my mother's room were open, in consequence of the unusual warmth of the weather. For the same reason, probably, a neighbouring beehive had swarmed, and the new colony, pitching on the window-sill, was making its way into the room when the horrified nurse shut down the sash. If that well-meaning woman had only abstained from her ill-timed interference, the swarm might have settled on my lips, and I should have been endowed with that mellifluous eloquence which, in this country, leads far more surely than worth, capacity, or honest work, to the highest places in Church and State. But the opportunity was lost, and I have been obliged to content myself through life with saying what I mean in the plainest of plain language, than which, I suppose, there is no habit more ruinous to a man's prospects of advancement.

Why I was christened Thomas Henry

I do not know ; but it is a curious chance that my parents should have fixed for my usual denomination upon the name of that particular Apostle with whom I have always felt most sympathy. Physically and mentally I am the son of my mother so completely—even down to peculiar movements of the hands, which made their appearance in me as I reached the age she had when I noticed them—that I can hardly find any trace of my father in myself, except an inborn faculty for drawing, which unfortunately, in my case, has never been cultivated, a hot temper, and that amount of tenacity of purpose which unfriendly observers sometimes call obstinacy.

My mother was a slender brunette, of an emotional and energetic temperament, and possessed of the most piercing black eyes I ever saw in a woman's head. With no more education than other women of the middle classes in her day, she had an excellent mental capacity. Her most distinguishing characteristic, however, was rapidity of thought. If one ventured to suggest she had not taken much time to arrive at any conclusion, she would say, "I cannot help it, things flash across me." That peculiarity has been passed on to me in full strength ; it has often stood me in good stead ; it has sometimes played me sad tricks, and it has always been a danger. But, after all, if my time were to come over again, there is nothing I would less willingly part with than my inheritance of mother wit.

I have next to nothing to say about

my childhood. In later years my mother, looking at me almost reproachfully, would sometimes say, "Ah! you were such a pretty boy!" whence I had no difficulty in concluding that I had not fulfilled my early promise in the matter of looks. In fact, I have a distinct recollection of certain curls of which I was vain, and of a conviction that I closely resembled that handsome, courtly gentleman, Sir Herbert Oakley, who was vicar of our parish, and who was as a god to us country folk, because he was occasionally visited by the then Prince George of Cambridge. I remember turning my pinafore wrong side forwards in order to represent a surplice, and preaching to my mother's maids in the kitchen as nearly as possible in Sir Herbert's manner one Sunday morning when the rest of the family were at church. That is the earliest indication I can call to mind of the strong clerical affinities which my friend Mr. Herbert Spencer has always ascribed to me, though I fancy they have for the most part remained in a latent state.

My regular school training was of the briefest, perhaps fortunately, for though my way of life has made me acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men, from the highest to the lowest, I deliberately affirm that the society I fell into at school was the worst I have ever known. We boys were average lads, with much the same inherent capacity for good and evil as any others; but the people who were set over us cared about as much for our intellectual and moral welfare as if they were baby-farmers. We were left to the operation of the struggle for existence among ourselves, and bullying was the least of the ill practices current among us. Almost the only cheerful reminiscence in connection with

the place which arises in my mind is that of a battle I had with one of my classmates, who had bullied me until I could stand it no longer. I was a very slight lad, but there was a wild-cat element in me which, when roused, made up for lack of weight, and I licked my adversary effectually. However, one of my first experiences of the extremely rough-and-ready nature of justice, as exhibited by the course of things in general, arose out of the fact that I—the victor—had a black eye, while he—the vanquished—had none, so that I got into disgrace and he did not. We made it up, and thereafter I was unmolested. One of the greatest shocks I ever received in my life was to be told a dozen years afterwards by the groom who brought me my horse in a stable-yard in Sydney that he was my quondam antagonist. He had a long story of family misfortune to account for his position, but at that time it was necessary to deal very cautiously with mysterious strangers in New South Wales, and on inquiry I found that the unfortunate young man had not only been "sent out," but had undergone more than one colonial conviction.

As I grew older, my great desire was to be a mechanical engineer, but the fates were against this, and, while very young, I commenced the study of medicine under a medical brother-in-law. But, though the Institute of Mechanical Engineers would certainly not own me, I am not sure that I have not all along been a sort of mechanical engineer *in partibus infidelium*. I am now occasionally horrified to think how very little I ever knew or cared about medicine as the art of healing. The only part of my professional course which really and deeply interested me was physiology,

which is the mechanical engineering of living machines; and, notwithstanding that natural science has been my proper business, I am afraid there is very little of the genuine naturalist in me. I never collected anything, and species work was always a burden to me; what I cared for was the architectural and engineering part of the business, the working out the wonderful unity of plan in the thousands and thousands of diverse living constructions, and the modifications of similar apparatuses to serve diverse ends. The extraordinary attraction I felt towards the study of the intricacies of living structure nearly proved fatal to me at the outset. I was a mere boy—I think between thirteen and fourteen years of age—when I was taken by some older student friends of mine to the first *post-mortem* examination I ever attended. All my life I have been most unfortunately sensitive to the disagreeables which attend anatomical pursuits, but on this occasion my curiosity overpowered all other feelings, and I spent two or three hours in gratifying it. I did not cut myself, and none of the ordinary symptoms of dissection-poison supervened, but poisoned I was somehow, and I remember sinking into a strange state of apathy. By way of a last chance, I was sent to the care of some good, kind people, friends of my father's, who lived in a farmhouse in the heart of Warwickshire. I remember staggering from my bed to the window on the bright spring morning after my arrival, and throwing open the casement. Life seemed to come back on the wings of the breeze, and to this day the faint odour of wood-smoke, like that which floated across the farm-yard in the early morning, is as good to me as the “sweet south upon a bed of violets.” I soon recovered,

but for years I suffered from occasional paroxysms of internal pain, and from that time my constant friend, hypochondriacal dyspepsia, commenced his half century of co-tenancy of my fleshly tabernacle.

Looking back on my “Lehrjahre,” I am sorry to say that I do not think that any account of my doings as a student would tend to edification. In fact, I should distinctly warn ingenuous youth to avoid imitating my example. I worked extremely hard when it pleased me, and when it did not—which was a very frequent case—I was extremely idle (unless making caricatures of one's pastors and masters is to be called a branch of industry), or else wasted my energies in wrong directions. I read everything I could lay hands upon, including novels, and took up all sorts of pursuits to drop them again quite as speedily. No doubt it was very largely my own fault, but the only instruction from which I ever obtained the proper effect of education was that which I received from Mr. Wharton Jones, who was the lecturer on physiology at the Charing Cross School of Medicine. The extent and precision of his knowledge impressed me greatly, and the severe exactness of his method of lecturing was quite to my taste. I do not know that I have ever felt so much respect for anybody as a teacher before or since. I worked hard to obtain his approbation, and he was extremely kind and helpful to the youngster who, I am afraid, took up more of his time than he had any right to do. It was he who suggested the publication of my first scientific paper—a very little one—in the *Medical Gazette* of 1845, and most kindly corrected the literary faults which abounded in it, short as it was; for at that time, and for many years afterwards,

I detested the trouble of writing, and would take no pains over it.

It was in the early spring of 1846, that having finished my obligatory medical studies and passed the first M.B. examination at the London University—though I was still too young to qualify at the College of Surgeons—I was talking to a fellow-student (the present eminent physician, Sir Joseph Fayrer), and wondering what I should do to meet the imperative necessity for earning my own bread, when my friend suggested that I should write to Sir William Burnett, at that time Director-General for the Medical Service of the Navy, for an appointment. I thought this rather a strong thing to do, as Sir William was personally unknown to me, but my cheery friend would not listen to my scruples, so I went to my lodgings and wrote the best letter I could devise. A few days afterwards I received the usual official circular of acknowledgment, but at the bottom there was written an instruction to call at Somerset House on such a day. I thought that looked like business, so at the appointed time I called and sent in my card, while I waited in Sir William's ante-room. He was a tall, shrewd-looking old gentleman, with a broad Scotch accent—and I think I see him now as he entered with my card in his hand. The first thing he did was to return it, with the frugal reminder that I should probably find it useful on some other occasion. The second was to ask whether I was an Irishman. I suppose the air of modesty about my appeal must have struck him. I satisfied the Director-General that I was English to the backbone, and he made some inquiries as to my student career, finally desiring me to hold myself ready for examination. Having passed this, I was

in Her Majesty's Service, and entered on the books of Nelson's old ship, the *Victory*, for duty at Haslar Hospital, about a couple of months after I made my application.

My official chief at Haslar was a very remarkable person, the late Sir John Richardson, an excellent naturalist, and far-famed as an indomitable Arctic traveller. He was a silent, reserved man, outside the circle of his family and intimates; and, having a full share of youthful vanity, I was extremely disgusted to find that "Old John," as we irreverent youngsters called him, took not the slightest notice of my worshipful self either the first time I attended him, as it was my duty to do, or for some weeks afterwards. I am afraid to think of the lengths to which my tongue may have run on the subject of the churlishness of the chief, who was, in truth, one of the kindest-hearted and most considerate of men. But one day, as I was crossing the hospital square, Sir John stopped me, and heaped coals of fire on my head by telling me that he had tried to get me one of the resident appointments, much coveted by the assistant-surgeons, but that the Admiralty had put in another man. "However," said he, "I mean to keep you here till I can get you something you will like," and turned upon his heel without waiting for the thanks I stammered out. That explained how it was I had not been packed off to the West Coast of Africa like some of my juniors, and why, eventually, I remained altogether seven months at Haslar.

After a long interval, during which "Old John" ignored my existence almost as completely as before, he stopped me again as we met in a casual way, and describing the service on which the

Rattlesnake was likely to be employed, said that Captain Owen Stanley, who was to command the ship, had asked him to recommend an assistant surgeon who knew something of science; would I like that? Of course I jumped at the offer. "Very well, I give you leave; go to London at once and see Captain Stanley." I went, saw my future commander, who was very civil to me, and promised to ask that I should be appointed to his ship, as in due time I was. It is a singular thing that, during the few months of my stay at Haslar, I had among my messmates two future Directors-General of the Medical Service of the Navy (Sir Alexander Armstrong and Sir John Watt-Reid), with the present President of the College of Physicians and my kindest of doctors, Sir Andrew Clark.

Life on board Her Majesty's ships in those days was a very different affair from what it is now, and ours was exceptionally rough, as we were often many months without receiving letters or seeing any civilised people but ourselves. In exchange, we had the interest of being about the last voyagers, I suppose, to whom it could be possible to meet with people who knew nothing of fire-arms—as we did on the south Coast of New Guinea—and of making acquaintance with a variety of interesting savage and semi-civilised people. But, apart from experience of this kind and the opportunities offered for scientific work, to me, personally, the cruise was extremely valuable. It was good for me to live under sharp discipline; to be down on the realities of existence by living on bare necessities; to find out how extremely well worth living life seemed to be when one woke up from a night's rest on a soft plank, with the sky for

canopy and cocoa and weevilly biscuit the sole prospect for breakfast; and, more especially, to learn to work for the sake of what I got for myself out of it, even if it all went to the bottom and I along with it. My brother officers were as good fellows as sailors ought to be and generally are, but, naturally, they neither knew nor cared anything about my pursuits, nor understood why I should be so zealous in pursuit of the objects which my friends, the middies, christened "*Buffons*," after the title conspicuous on a volume of the "*Suites à Buffon*," which stood on my shelf in the chart room.

During the four years of our absence, I sent home communication after communication to the "*Linnean Society*," with the same result as that obtained by Noah when he sent the raven out of his ark. Tired at last of hearing nothing about them, I determined to do or die, and in 1849 I drew up a more elaborate paper and forwarded it to the Royal Society. This was my dove, if I had only known it. But owing to the movements of the ship, I heard nothing of that either until my return to England in the latter end of the year 1850, when I found that it was printed and published, and that a huge packet of separate copies awaited me. When I hear some of my young friends complain of want of sympathy and encouragement, I am inclined to think that my naval life was not the least valuable part of my education.

Three years after my return were occupied by a battle between my scientific friends on the one hand and the Admiralty on the other, as to whether the latter ought, or ought not, to act up to the spirit of a pledge they had given to encourage officers who had done

scientific work by contributing to the expense of publishing mine. At last the Admiralty, getting tired, I suppose, cut short the discussion by ordering me to join a ship, which thing I declined to do, and as Rastignac, in the "Père Goriot," says to Paris, I said to London, "*à nous deux.*" I desired to obtain a Professorship of either Physiology or Comparative Anatomy, and as vacancies occurred I applied, but in vain. My friend, Professor Tyndall, and I were candidates at the same time, he for the Chair of Physics and I for that of Natural History in the University of Toronto, which, fortunately, as it turned out, would not look at either of us. I say fortunately, not from any lack of respect for Toronto, but because I soon made up my mind that London was the place for me, and hence I have steadily declined the inducements to leave it, which have at various times been offered. At last, in 1854, on the translation of my warm friend Edward Forbes, to Edinburgh, Sir Henry De la Beche, the Director-General of the Geological Survey, offered me the post Forbes vacated of Paleontologist and Lecturer on Natural History. I refused the former point blank, and accepted the latter only provisionally, telling Sir Henry that I did not care for fossils, and that I should give up Natural History as soon as I could get a physiological post. But I held the office for thirty-one years, and a large part of my work has been paleontological.

At that time I disliked public speaking, and had a firm conviction that I should break down every time I opened my mouth. I believe I had every fault a speaker could have (except talking at random or indulging in rhetoric), when I spoke to the first important audience

I ever addressed, on a Friday evening at the Royal Institution, in 1852. Yet, I must confess to having been guilty, *malgré moi*, of as much public speaking as most of my contemporaries, and for the last ten years it ceased to be so much of a bugbear to me. I used to pity myself for having to go through this training, but I am now more disposed to compassionate the unfortunate audiences, especially my ever-friendly hearers at the Royal Institution, who were the subjects of my oratorical experiments.

The last thing that it would be proper for me to do would be to speak of the work of my life, or to say at the end of the day whether I think I have earned my wages or not. Men are said to be partial judges of themselves. Young men may be; I doubt if old men are. Life seems terribly foreshortened as they look back, and the mountain they set themselves to climb in youth turns out to be a mere spur of immeasurably higher ranges when, with failing breath, they reach the top. But if I may speak of the objects I have had more or less definitely in view since I began the ascent of my hillock, they are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off.

It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable, or un-

reasonable, ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends ; to the popularisation of science ; to the development and organisation of scientific education ; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution ; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science.

In striving for the attainment of these objects, I have been but one among many, and I shall be well content to be remembered, or even not remembered, as such. Circumstances, among which

I am proud to reckon the devoted kindness of many friends, have led to my occupation of various prominent positions, among which the Presidency of the Royal Society is the highest. It would be mock modesty on my part, with these and other scientific honours which have been bestowed upon me, to pretend that I have not succeeded in the career which I have followed, rather because I was driven into it than of my own free will ; but I am afraid I should not count even these things as marks of success if I could not hope that I had somewhat helped that movement of opinion which has been called the New Reformation.

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

LECTURES ON EVOLUTION

[NEW YORK ; 1876]

I

THE THREE HYPOTHESES RESPECTING THE HISTORY OF NATURE

WE live in and form part of a system of things of immense diversity and perplexity, which we call Nature ; and it is a matter of the deepest interest to all of us that we should form just conceptions of the constitution of that system and of its past history. With relation to this universe, man is, in extent, little more than a mathematical point ; in duration but a fleeting shadow ; he is a mere reed shaken in the winds of force. But as Pascal long ago remarked, although a mere reed, he is a thinking reed ; and in virtue of that wonderful

capacity of thought, he has the power of framing for himself a symbolic conception of the universe, which, although doubtless highly imperfect and inadequate as a picture of the great whole, is yet sufficient to serve him as a chart for the guidance of his practical affairs. It has taken long ages of toilsome and often fruitless labour to enable man to look steadily at the shifting scenes of the phantasmagoria of Nature, to notice what is fixed among her fluctuations, and what is regular among her apparent irregularities ; and it is only comparatively lately, within the last few centuries, that the conception of a universal order and of a definite course of things, which we term the course of Nature, has emerged.

But, once originated, the conception of the constancy of the order of Nature has become the dominant idea of modern thought. To any person who is familiar with the facts upon which that conception is based, and is competent to estimate their significance, it has ceased to be conceivable that chance should have any place in the universe, or that events should depend upon any but the natural sequence of cause and effect. We have come to look upon the present as the child of the past and as the parent of the future; and, as we have excluded chance from a place in the universe, so we ignore, even as a possibility, the notion of any interference with the order of Nature. Whatever may be men's speculative doctrines, it is quite certain that every intelligent person guides his life and risks his fortune upon the belief that the order of Nature is constant, and that the chain of natural causation is never broken.

In fact, no belief which we entertain has so complete a logical basis as that to which I have just referred. It tacitly underlies every process of reasoning; it is the foundation of every act of the will. It is based upon the broadest induction, and it is verified by the most constant, regular, and universal of deductive processes. But we must recollect that any human belief, however broad its basis, however defensible it may seem, is, after all, only a probable belief, and that our widest and safest generalisations are simply statements of the highest degree of probability. Though we are quite clear about the constancy of the order of Nature, at the present time, and in the present state of things, it by no means necessarily follows that we are justified in expanding this generalisation into the infinite past, and in denying, absolutely, that there may have been a time when Nature did not follow a fixed order, when the relations of cause and effect were not definite, and when extraneous agencies interfered with the general course of Nature. Cautious men will allow that a universe so different from

that which we know may have existed; just as a very candid thinker may admit that a world in which two and two do not make four, and in which two straight lines do inclose a space, may exist. But the same caution which forces the admission of such possibilities demands a great deal of evidence before it recognises them to be anything more substantial. And when it is asserted that, so many thousand years ago, events occurred in a manner utterly foreign to and inconsistent with the existing laws of Nature, men who without being particularly cautious are simply honest thinkers, unwilling to deceive themselves or delude others, ask for trustworthy evidence of the fact.

Did things so happen or did they not? This is a historical question, and one the answer to which must be sought in the same way as the solution of any other historical problem.

So far as I know, there are only three hypotheses which ever have been entertained, or which well can be entertained, respecting the past history of Nature. I will, in the first place, state the hypotheses, and then I will consider what evidence bearing upon them is in our possession, and by what light of criticism that evidence is to be interpreted.

Upon the first hypothesis, the assumption is, that phenomena of Nature similar to those exhibited by the present world have always existed; in other words, that the universe has existed, from all eternity, in what may be broadly termed its present condition.

The second hypothesis is that the present state of things has had only a limited duration; and that, at some period in the past, a condition of the world, essentially similar to that which we now know, came into existence, without any precedent condition from which it could have naturally proceeded. The assumption that successive states of Nature have arisen, each without any relation of natural causation to an antecedent state, is a mere modification of this second hypothesis.

The third hypothesis also assumes that the present state of things has had but a limited duration; but it supposes that this state has been evolved by a natural process from an antecedent state, and that from another, and so on; and, on this hypothesis, the attempt to assign any limit to the series of past changes is, usually, given up.

It is so needful to form clear and distinct notions of what is really meant by each of these hypotheses that I will ask you to imagine what, according to each, would have been visible to a spectator of the events which constitute the history of the earth. On the first hypothesis, however far back in time that spectator might be placed, he would see a world essentially, though perhaps not in all its details, similar to that which now exists. The animals which existed would be the ancestors of those which now live, and similar to them; the plants, in like manner, would be such as we know; and the mountains, plains, and waters would foreshadow the salient features of our present land and water. This view was held more or less distinctly, sometimes combined with the notion of recurrent cycles of change, in ancient times; and its influence has been felt down to the present day. It is worthy of remark that it is a hypothesis which is not inconsistent with the doctrine of Uniformitarianism, with which geologists are familiar. That doctrine was held by Hutton, and in his earlier days by Lyell. Hutton was struck by the demonstration of astronomers that the perturbations of the planetary bodies, however great they may be, yet sooner or later right themselves; and that the solar system possesses a self-adjusting power by which these aberrations are all brought back to a mean condition. Hutton imagined that the like might be true of terrestrial changes; although no one recognised more clearly than he the fact that the dry land is being constantly washed down by rain and rivers and deposited in the sea; and that thus, in

a longer or shorter time, the inequalities of the earth's surface must be levelled, and its high lands brought down to the ocean. But, taking into account the internal forces of the earth, which, upheaving the sea-bottom, give rise to new land, he thought that these operations of degradation and elevation might compensate each other; and that thus, for any assignable time, the general features of our planet might remain what they are. And inasmuch as, under these circumstances, there need be no limit to the propagation of animals and plants, it is clear that the consistent working-out of the uniformitarian idea might lead to the conception of the eternity of the world. Not that I mean to say that either Hutton or Lyell held this conception—assuredly not; they would have been the first to repudiate it. Nevertheless, the logical development of some of their arguments tends directly towards this hypothesis.

The second hypothesis supposes that the present order of things, at some no very remote time, had a sudden origin, and that the world, such as it now is, had chaos for its phenomenal antecedent. That is the doctrine which you will find stated most fully and clearly in the immortal poem of John Milton—the English *Divina Commedia*—“Paradise Lost.” I believe it is largely to the influence of that remarkable work, combined with the daily teachings to which we have all listened in our childhood, that this hypothesis owes its general wide diffusion as one of the current beliefs of English-speaking people. If you turn to the seventh book of “Paradise Lost,” you will find there stated the hypothesis to which I refer, which is briefly this: That this visible universe of ours came into existence at no great distance of time from the present; and that the parts of which it is composed made their appearance, in a certain definite order, in the space of six natural days, in such a manner that, on the first of these days, light appeared; that, on the second, the firmament, or

sky, separated the waters above, from the waters beneath, the firmament; that, on the third day, the waters drew away from the dry land, and upon it a varied vegetable life, similar to that which now exists, made its appearance; that the fourth day was signalised by the apparition of the sun, the stars, the moon, and the planets; that, on the fifth day, aquatic animals originated within the waters; that, on the sixth day, the earth gave rise to our four-footed terrestrial creatures, and to all varieties of terrestrial animals except birds, which had appeared on the preceding day; and, finally, that man appeared upon the earth, and the emergence of the universe from chaos was finished. Milton tells us, without the least ambiguity, what a spectator of these marvellous occurrences would have witnessed. I doubt not that his poem is familiar to all of you, but I should like to recall one passage to your minds, in order that I may be justified in what I have said regarding the perfectly concrete, definite, picture of the origin of the animal world which Milton draws. He says:—

“ The sixth, and of creation last, arose
 With evening harps and matin, when God
 said,
 ‘ Let the earth bring forth soul living in her
 kind,
 Cattle and creeping things, and beast of the
 earth,
 Each in their kind ! ’ The earth obeyed, and,
 straight
 Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth
 Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
 Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground
 uprose,
 As from his lair, the wild beast, where he
 wons
 In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
 Among the trees in pairs they rose, they
 walked;
 The cattle in the fields and meadows green;
 Those rare and solitary; these in flocks
 Pasturing at once, and in broad herds up-
 sprung.
 The grassy clods now calved; now half
 appears
 The tawny lion, pawing to get free
 His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from
 bonds,
 And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the
 ounce,

The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
 Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
 In hillocks; the swift stag from underground
 Bore up his branching head; scarce from his
 mould
 Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
 His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating
 rose
 As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,
 The river-horse and scaly crocodile.
 At once came forth whatever creeps the
 ground,
 Insect or worm.

There is no doubt as to the meaning of this statement, nor as to what a man of Milton's genius expected would have been actually visible to an eye-witness of this mode of origination of living things.

The third hypothesis, or the hypothesis of evolution, supposes that, at any comparatively late period of past time, our imaginary spectator would meet with a state of things very similar to that which now obtains; but that the likeness of the past to the present would gradually become less and less, in proportion to the remoteness of his period of observation from the present day; that the existing distribution of mountains and plains, of rivers and seas, would show itself to be the product of a slow process of natural change operating upon more and more widely different antecedent conditions of the mineral framework of the earth; until, at length, in place of that framework, he would behold only a vast nebulous mass, representing the constituents of the sun and of the planetary bodies. Preceding the forms of life which now exist, our observer would see animals and plants, not identical with them, but like them, increasing their differences with their antiquity and, at the same time, becoming simpler and simpler; until, finally, the world of life would present nothing but that undifferentiated protoplasmic matter which, so far as our present knowledge goes, is the common foundation of all vital activity.

The hypothesis of evolution supposes that in all this vast progression there would be no breach of continuity, no

point at which we could say "This is a natural process," and "This is not a natural process;" but that the whole might be compared to that wonderful operation of development which may be seen going on every day under our eyes, in virtue of which there arises, out of the semi-fluid comparatively homogeneous substance which we call an egg, the complicated organisation of one of the higher animals. That, in a few words, is what is meant by the hypothesis of evolution.

I have already suggested that, in dealing with these three hypotheses, in endeavouring to form a judgment as to which of them is the more worthy of belief, or whether none is worthy of belief—in which case our condition of mind should be that suspension of judgment which is so difficult to all but trained intellects—we should be indifferent to all *a priori* considerations. The question is a question of historical fact. The universe has come into existence somehow or other, and the problem is, whether it came into existence in one fashion, or whether it came into existence in another; and, as an essential preliminary to further discussion, permit me to say two or three words as to the nature and the kinds of historical evidence.

The evidence as to the occurrence of any event in past time may be ranged under two heads which, for convenience' sake, I will speak of as testimonial evidence and as circumstantial evidence. By testimonial evidence I mean human testimony; and by circumstantial evidence I mean evidence which is not human testimony. Let me illustrate by a familiar example what I understand by these two kinds of evidence, and what is to be said respecting their value.

Suppose that a man tells you that he saw a person strike another and kill him; that is testimonial evidence of the fact of murder. But it is possible to have circumstantial evidence of the fact of murder; that is to say, you may find a man dying with a wound upon his

head having exactly the form and character of the wound which is made by an axe, and, with due care in taking surrounding circumstances into account, you may conclude with the utmost certainty that the man has been murdered; that his death is the consequence of a blow inflicted by another man with that implement. We are very much in the habit of considering circumstantial evidence as of less value than testimonial evidence, and it may be that, where the circumstances are not perfectly clear and intelligible, it is a dangerous and unsafe kind of evidence; but it must not be forgotten that, in many cases, circumstantial is quite as conclusive as testimonial evidence, and that, not unfrequently, it is a great deal weightier than testimonial evidence. For example, take the case to which I referred just now. The circumstantial evidence may be better and more convincing than the testimonial evidence; for it may be impossible, under the conditions that I have defined, to suppose that the man met his death from any cause but the violent blow of an axe wielded by another man. The circumstantial evidence in favour of a murder having been committed, in that case, is as complete and as convincing as evidence can be. It is evidence which is open to no doubt and to no falsification. But the testimony of a witness is open to multitudinous doubts. He may have been mistaken. He may have been actuated by malice. It has constantly happened that even an accurate man has declared that a thing has happened in this, that, or the other way, when a careful analysis of the circumstantial evidence has shown that it did not happen in that way, but in some other way.

We may now consider the evidence in favour of or against the three hypotheses. Let me first direct your attention to what is to be said about the hypothesis of the eternity of the state of things in which we now live. What will first strike you is, that it is a hypothesis which, whether true or false, is not capable of verification

by any evidence. For, in order to obtain either circumstantial or testimonial evidence sufficient to prove the eternity of duration of the present state of nature, you must have an eternity of witnesses

most, would be, that so far as the evidence could be traced, there was nothing to contradict the hypothesis. But when you look, not to the testimonial evidence—which, considering the

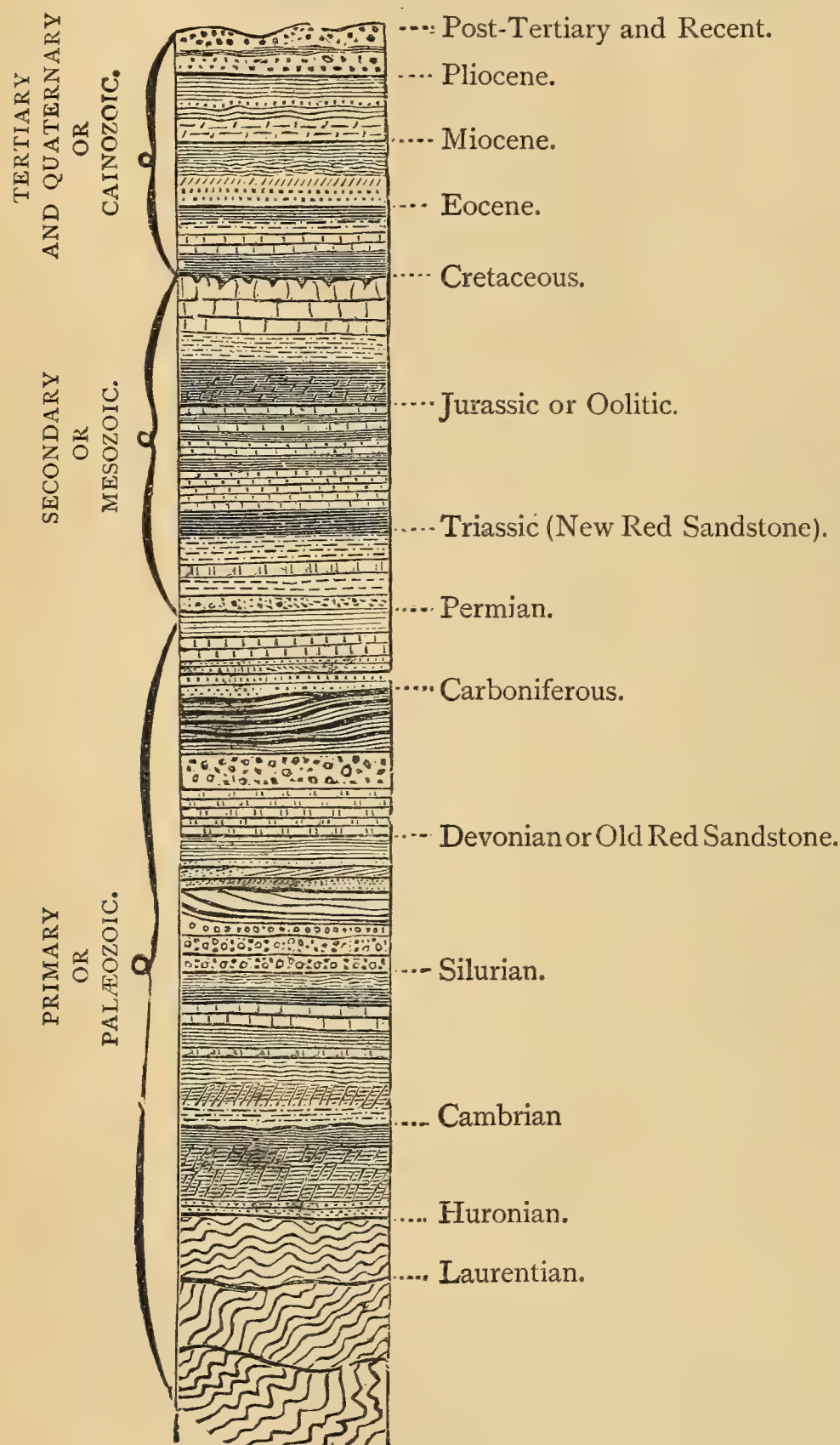


FIG. 1.—IDEAL SECTION OF THE CRUST OF THE EARTH.

or an infinity of circumstances, and neither of these is attainable. It is utterly impossible that such evidence should be carried beyond a certain point of time; and all that could be said, at

of the world, is practically identical in its physical and chemical characters with a substance which is now being formed at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, and covers an enormous area;

relative insignificance of the antiquity of human records, might not be good for much in this case—but to the circumstantial evidence, then you find that this hypothesis is absolutely incompatible with such evidence as we have; which is of so plain and so simple a character that it is impossible in any way to escape from the conclusions which it forces upon us.

You are, doubtless, all aware that the outer substance of the earth, which alone is accessible to direct observation, is not of a homogeneous character, but that it is made up of a number of layers or strata, the titles of the principal groups of which are placed upon the accompanying diagram. Each of these groups represents a number of beds of sand, of stone, of clay, of slate, and of various other materials.

On careful examination, it is found that the materials of which each of these layers of more or less hard rock are composed are, for the most part, of the same nature as those which are at present being formed under known conditions on the surface of the earth. For example, the chalk, which constitutes a great part of the Cretaceous formation in some parts

other beds of rock are comparable with the sands which are being formed upon sea-shores, packed together, and so on. Thus, omitting rocks of igneous origin, it is demonstrable that all these beds of stone, of which a total of not less than seventy thousand feet is known, have been formed by natural agencies, either out of the waste and washing of the dry land, or else by the accumulation of the exuviae of plants and animals. Many of these strata are full of such exuviae—the so-called “fossils.” Remains of thousands of species of animals and plants, as perfectly recognisable as those of existing forms of life which you meet with in museums, or as the shells which you pick up upon the sea-beach, have been imbedded in the ancient sands, or muds, or limestones, just as they are being imbedded now, in sandy, or clayey, or calcareous subaqueous deposits. They furnish us with a record, the general nature of which cannot be misinterpreted, of the kinds of things that have lived upon the surface of the earth during the time that is registered by this great thickness of stratified rocks. But even a superficial study of these fossils shows us that the animals and plants which live at the present time have had only a temporary duration; for the remains of such modern forms of life are met with, for the most part, only in the uppermost or latest tertiaries, and their number rapidly diminishes in the lower deposits of that epoch. In the older tertiaries, the places of existing animals and plants are taken by other forms, as numerous and diversified as those which live now in the same localities, but more or less different from them; in the mesozoic rocks, these are replaced by others yet more divergent from modern types; and, in the palæozoic formations the contrast is still more marked. Thus the circumstantial evidence absolutely negatives the conception of the eternity of the present condition of things. We can say, with certainty, that the present condition of things has existed for a comparatively

short period; and that, so far as animal and vegetable nature are concerned, it has been preceded by a different condition. We can pursue this evidence until we reach the lowest of the stratified rocks, in which we lose the indications of life altogether. The hypothesis of the eternity of the present state of nature may therefore be put out of court.

We now come to what I will term Milton's hypothesis—the hypothesis that the present condition of things has endured for a comparatively short time; and, at the commencement of that time, came into existence within the course of six days. I doubt not that it may have excited some surprise in your minds that I should have spoken of this as Milton's hypothesis, rather than that I should have chosen the terms which are more customary, such as “the doctrine of creation,” or “the Biblical doctrine,” or “the doctrine of Moses,” all of which denominations, as applied to the hypothesis to which I have just referred, are certainly much more familiar to you than the title of the Miltonic hypothesis. But I have had what I cannot but think are very weighty reasons for taking the course which I have pursued. In the first place, I have discarded the title of the “doctrine of creation,” because my present business is not with the question why the objects which constitute Nature came into existence, but when they came into existence, and in what order. This is as strictly a historical question as the question when the Angles and the Jutes invaded England, and whether they preceded or followed the Romans. But the question about creation is a philosophical problem, and one which cannot be solved, or even approached, by the historical method. What we want to learn is, whether the facts, so far as they are known, afford evidence that things arose in the way described by Milton, or whether they do not; and, when that question is settled, it will be time enough to inquire into the causes of their origination.

In the second place, I have not

spoken of this doctrine as the Biblical doctrine. It is quite true that persons as diverse in their general views as Milton the Protestant and the celebrated Jesuit Father Suarez, each put upon the first chapter of Genesis the interpretation embodied in Milton's poem. It is quite true that this interpretation is that which has been instilled into every one of us in our childhood; but I do not for one moment venture to say that it can properly be called the Biblical doctrine. It is not my business, and does not lie within my competency, to say what the Hebrew text does, and what it does not signify; moreover, were I to affirm that this is the Biblical doctrine, I should be met by the authority of many eminent scholars, to say nothing of men of science, who, at various times, have absolutely denied that any such doctrine is to be found in Genesis. If we are to listen to many expositors of no mean authority, we must believe that what seems so clearly defined in Genesis—as if very great pains had been taken that there should be no possibility of mistake—is not the meaning of the text at all. The account is divided into periods that we may make just as long or as short as convenience requires. We are also to understand that it is consistent with the original text to believe that the most complex plants and animals may have been evolved by natural processes, lasting for millions of years, out of structureless rudiments. A person who is not a Hebrew scholar can only stand aside and admire the marvellous flexibility of a language which admits of such diverse interpretations. But assuredly, in the face of such contradictions of authority upon matters respecting which he is incompetent to form any judgment, he will abstain, as I do, from giving any opinion.

In the third place, I have carefully abstained from speaking of this as the Mosaic doctrine, because we are now assured upon the authority of the highest critics, and even of dignitaries of the

Church, that there is no evidence that Moses wrote the Book of Genesis, or knew anything about it. You will understand that I give no judgment—it would be an impertinence upon my part to volunteer even a suggestion—upon such a subject. But, that being the state of opinion among the scholars and the clergy, it is well for the unlearned in Hebrew lore, and for the laity, to avoid entangling themselves in such a vexed question. Happily, Milton leaves us no excuse for doubting what he means, and I shall therefore be safe in speaking of the opinion in question as the Miltonic hypothesis.

Now we have to test that hypothesis. For my part, I have no prejudice one way or the other. If there is evidence in favour of this view, I am burdened by no theoretical difficulties in the way of accepting it; but there must be evidence. Scientific men get an awkward habit—no, I won't call it that, for it is a valuable habit—of believing nothing unless there is evidence for it; and they have a way of looking upon belief which is not based upon evidence, not only as illogical, but as immoral. We will, if you please, test this view by the circumstantial evidence alone; for, from what I have said, you will understand that I do not propose to discuss the question of what testimonial evidence is to be adduced in favour of it. If those whose business it is to judge are not at one as to the authenticity of the only evidence of that kind which is offered, nor as to the facts to which it bears witness, the discussion of such evidence is superfluous.

But I may be permitted to regret this necessity of rejecting the testimonial evidence the less, because the examination of the circumstantial evidence leads to the conclusion, not only that it is incompetent to justify the hypothesis, but that, so far as it goes, it is contrary to the hypothesis.

The considerations upon which I base this conclusion are of the simplest possible character. The Miltonic hypothesis contains assertions of a very

definite character relating to the succession of living forms. It is stated that plants, for example, made their appearance upon the third day, and not before. And you will understand that what the poet means by plants are such plants as now live, the ancestors, in the ordinary way of propagation of like by like, of the trees and shrubs which flourish in the present world. It must needs be so; for, if they were different, either the existing plants have been the result of a separate origination since that described by Milton, of which we have no record, nor any ground for supposition that such an occurrence has taken place; or else they have arisen by a process of evolution from the original stocks.

In the second place, it is clear that there was no animal life before the fifth day, and that, on the fifth day, aquatic animals and birds appeared. And it is further clear that terrestrial living things, other than birds, made their appearance upon the sixth day and not before. Hence, it follows that, if, in the large mass of circumstantial evidence as to what really has happened in the past history of the globe we find indications of the existence of terrestrial animals, other than birds, at a certain period, it is perfectly certain that all that has taken place, since that time, must be referred to the sixth day.

In the great Carboniferous formation, whence America derives so vast a proportion of her actual and potential wealth, in the beds of coal which have been formed from the vegetation of that period, we find abundant evidence of the existence of terrestrial animals. They have been described, not only by European but by your own naturalists. There are to be found numerous insects allied to our cockroaches. There are to be found spiders and scorpions of large size, the latter so similar to existing scorpions that it requires the practised eye of the naturalist to distinguish them. Inasmuch as these animals can be proved to have been alive in the Carboniferous epoch, it is perfectly clear

that, if the Miltonic account is to be accepted, the huge mass of rocks extending from the middle of the Palæozoic formations to the uppermost members of the series, must belong to the day which is termed by Milton the sixth. But, further, it is expressly stated that aquatic animals took their origin on the fifth day, and not before; hence, all formations in which remains of aquatic animals can be proved to exist, and which therefore testify that such animals lived at the time when these formations were in course of deposition, must have been deposited during or since the period which Milton speaks of as the fifth day. But there is absolutely no fossiliferous formation in which the remains of aquatic animals are absent. The oldest fossils in the Silurian rocks are exuviae of marine animals; and if the view which is entertained by Principal Dawson and Dr. Carpenter respecting the nature of the *Eozoön* be well-founded, aquatic animals existed at a period as far antecedent to the deposition of the coal as the coal is from us; inasmuch as the *Eozoön* is met with in those Laurentian strata which lie at the bottom of the series of stratified rocks. Hence it follows, plainly enough, that the whole series of stratified rocks, if they are to be brought into harmony with Milton, must be referred to the fifth and sixth days, and that we cannot hope to find the slightest trace of the products of the earlier days in the geological record. When we consider these simple facts, we see how absolutely futile are the attempts that have been made to draw a parallel between the story told by so much of the crust of the earth as is known to us and the story which Milton tells. The whole series of fossiliferous stratified rocks must be referred to the last two days; and neither the Carboniferous, nor any other, formation can afford evidence of the work of the third day.

Not only is there this objection to any attempt to establish a harmony between the Miltonic account and the facts re-

corded in the fossiliferous rocks, but there is a further difficulty. According to the Miltonic account, the order in which animals should have made their appearance in the stratified rocks would be this: Fishes, including the great whales, and birds; after them, all varieties of terrestrial animals except birds. Nothing could be further from the facts as we find them; we know of not the slightest evidence of the existence of birds before the Jurassic, or perhaps the Triassic, formation; while terrestrial animals, as we have just seen, occur in the Carboniferous rocks.

If there were any harmony between the Miltonic account and the circumstantial evidence, we ought to have abundant evidence of the existence of birds in the Carboniferous, the Devonian, and the Silurian rocks. I need hardly say that this is not the case, and that not a trace of birds makes its appearance until the far later period which I have mentioned.

And again, if it be true that all varieties of fishes and the great whales, and the like, made their appearance on the fifth day, we ought to find the remains of these animals in the older rocks—in those which were deposited before the Carboniferous epoch. Fishes we do find, in considerable number and variety; but the great whales are absent, and the fishes are not such as now live. Not one solitary species of fish now in existence is to be found in the Devonian or Silurian formations. Hence we are introduced afresh to the dilemma which I have already placed before you: either the animals which came into existence on the fifth day were not such as those which are found at present, are not the direct and immediate ancestors of those which now exist; in which case, either fresh creations of which nothing is said, or a process of evolution, must have occurred; or else the whole story must be given up, as not only devoid of any circumstantial evidence, but contrary to such evidence as exists.

I placed before you in a few words,

some little time ago, a statement of the sum and substance of Milton's hypothesis. Let me now try to state, as briefly, the effect of the circumstantial evidence bearing upon the past history of the earth which is furnished, without the possibility of mistake, with no chance of error as to its chief features, by the stratified rocks. What we find is, that the great series of formations represents a period of time of which our human chronologies hardly afford us a unit of measure. I will not pretend to say how we ought to estimate this time, in millions or in billions of years. For my purpose, the determination of its absolute duration is wholly unessential. But that the time was enormous there can be no question.

It results from the simplest methods of interpretation, that leaving out of view certain patches of metamorphosed rocks, and certain volcanic products, all that is now dry land has once been at the bottom of the waters. It is perfectly certain that, at a comparatively recent period of the world's history—the Cretaceous epoch—none of the great physical features which at present mark the surface of the globe existed. It is certain that the Rocky Mountains were not. It is certain that the Himalaya Mountains were not. It is certain that the Alps and the Pyrenees had no existence. The evidence is of the plainest possible character, and is simply this:—We find raised up on the flanks of these mountains, elevated by the forces of upheaval which have given rise to them, masses of Cretaceous rock which formed the bottom of the sea before those mountains existed. It is therefore clear that the elevatory forces which gave rise to the mountains operated subsequently to the Cretaceous epoch; and that the mountains themselves are largely made up of the materials deposited in the sea which once occupied their place. As we go back in time, we meet with constant alternations of sea and land, of estuary and open ocean; and, in correspondence with these alternations, we observe the

changes in the fauna and flora to which I have referred.

But the inspection of these changes give us no right to believe that there has been any discontinuity in natural processes. There is no trace of general cataclysms, of universal deluges, or sudden destructions of a whole fauna or flora. The appearances which were formerly interpreted in that way have all been shown to be delusive, as our knowledge has increased and as the blanks which formerly appeared to exist between the different formations have been filled up. That there is no absolute break between formation and formation, that there has been no sudden disappearance of all the forms of life and replacement of them by others, but that changes have gone on slowly and gradually, that one type has died out and another has taken its place, and that thus, by insensible degrees, one fauna has been replaced by another, are conclusions strengthened by constantly increasing evidence. So that within the whole of the immense period indicated by the fossiliferous stratified rocks, there is assuredly not the slightest proof of any break in the uniformity of Nature's operations, no indication that events have followed other than a clear and orderly sequence.

That, I say, is the natural and obvious teaching of the circumstantial evidence contained in the stratified rocks. I leave you to consider how far, by any ingenuity of interpretation, by any stretching of the meaning of language, it can be brought into harmony with the Miltonic hypothesis.

There remains the third hypothesis, that of which I have spoken as the hypothesis of evolution; and I purpose that, in lectures to come, we should discuss it as carefully as we have considered the other two hypotheses. I need not say that it is quite hopeless to look for testimonial evidence of evolution. The very nature of the case precludes the possibility of such evidence, for the human race can no more

be expected to testify to its own origin, than a child can be tendered as a witness of its own birth. Our sole inquiry is, what foundation circumstantial evidence lends to the hypothesis, or whether it lends none, or whether it controverts the hypothesis. I shall deal with the matter entirely as a question of history. I shall not indulge in the discussion of any speculative probabilities. I shall not attempt to show that Nature is unintelligible unless we adopt some such hypothesis. For anything I know about the matter, it may be the way of Nature to be unintelligible; she is often puzzling, and I have no reason to suppose that she is bound to fit herself to our notions.

I shall place before you three kinds of evidence entirely based upon what is known of the forms of animal life which are contained in the series of stratified rocks. I shall endeavour to show you that there is one kind of evidence which is neutral, which neither helps evolution nor is inconsistent with it. I shall then bring forward a second kind of evidence which indicates a strong probability in favour of evolution, but does not prove it; and, lastly, I shall adduce a third kind of evidence which, being as complete as any evidence which we can hope to obtain upon such a subject, and being wholly and strikingly in favour of evolution, may fairly be called demonstrative evidence of its occurrence.

II

THE HYPOTHESIS OF EVOLUTION. THE NEUTRAL AND THE FAVOURABLE EVIDENCE

IN the preceding lecture I pointed out that there are three hypotheses which may be entertained, and which have been entertained, respecting the past history of life upon the globe. According to the first of these hypotheses, living beings, such as now exist, have existed from all eternity upon this earth. We

tested that hypothesis by the circumstantial evidence, as I called it, which is furnished by the fossil remains contained in the earth's crust, and we found that it was obviously untenable. I then proceeded to consider the second hypothesis, which I termed the Miltonic hypothesis, not because it is of any particular consequence whether John Milton seriously entertained it or not, but because it is stated in a clear and unmistakable manner in his great poem. I pointed out to you that the evidence at our command as completely and fully negatives that hypothesis as it did the preceding one. And I confess that I had too much respect for your intelligence to think it necessary to add that the negation was equally clear and equally valid, whatever the source from which that hypothesis might be derived, or whatever the authority by which it might be supported. I further stated that, according to the third hypothesis, or that of evolution, the existing state of things is the last term of a long series of states, which, when traced back, would be found to show no interruption and no breach in the continuity of natural causation. I propose, in the present and the following lecture, to test this hypothesis rigorously by the evidence at command, and to inquire how far that evidence can be said to be indifferent to it, how far it can be said to be favourable to it, and, finally, how far it can be said to be demonstrative.

From almost the origin of the discussions about the existing condition of the animal and vegetable worlds and the causes which have determined that condition, an argument has been put forward as an objection to evolution, which we shall have to consider very seriously. It is an argument which was first clearly stated by Cuvier in his criticism of the doctrines propounded by his great contemporary, Lamarck. The French expedition to Egypt had called the attention of learned men to the wonderful store of antiquities in that country, and there had been brought back to France numerous mummified corpses of the animals

which the ancient Egyptians revered and preserved, and which, at a reasonable computation, must have lived not less than three or four thousand years before the time at which they were thus brought to light. Cuvier endeavoured to test the hypothesis that animals have undergone gradual and progressive modifications of structure, by comparing the skeletons and such other parts of the mummies as were in a fitting state of preservation, with the corresponding parts of the representatives of the same species now living in Egypt. He arrived at the conviction that no appreciable change had taken place in these animals in the course of this considerable lapse of time, and the justice of his conclusion is not disputed.

It is obvious that, if it can be proved that animals have endured, without undergoing any demonstrable change of structure, for so long a period as four thousand years, no form of the hypothesis of evolution which assumes that animals undergo a constant and necessary progressive change can be tenable; unless, indeed, it be further assumed that four thousand years is too short a time for the production of a change sufficiently great to be detected.

But it is no less plain that if the process of evolution of animals is not independent of surrounding conditions; if it may be indefinitely hastened or retarded by variations in these conditions; or if evolution is simply a process of accommodation to varying conditions; the argument against the hypothesis of evolution based on the unchanged character of the Egyptian fauna is worthless. For the monuments which are coeval with the mummies testify as strongly to the absence of change in the physical geography and the general conditions of the land of Egypt, for the time in question, as the mummies do to the unvarying characters of its living population.

The progress of research since Cuvier's time has supplied far more striking examples of the long duration of specific forms of life than those which are furnished by the mummified Ibises and

Crocodiles of Egypt. A remarkable case is to be found in your own country, in the neighbourhood of the falls of Niagara. In the immediate vicinity of the whirlpool, and again upon Goat Island, in the superficial deposits which cover the surface of the rocky subsoil in those regions, there are found remains of animals in perfect preservation, and among them, shells belonging to exactly the same species as those which at present inhabit the still waters of Lake Erie. It is evident, from the structure of the country, that these animal remains were deposited in the beds in which they occur at a time when the lake extended over the region in which they are found. This involves the conclusion that they lived and died before the falls had cut their way back through the gorge of Niagara; and, indeed, it has been determined that, when these animals lived, the falls of Niagara must have been at least six miles further down the river than they are at present. Many computations have been made of the rate at which the falls are thus cutting their way back. Those computations have varied greatly, but I believe I am speaking within the bounds of prudence, if I assume that the falls of Niagara have not retreated at a greater pace than about a foot a year. Six miles, speaking roughly, are 30,000 feet; 30,000 feet, at a foot a year, gives 30,000 years; and thus we are fairly justified in concluding that no less a period than this has passed since the shell-fish, whose remains are left in the beds to which I have referred, were living creatures.

But there is still stronger evidence of the long duration of certain types. I have already stated that, as we work our way through the great series of the Tertiary formations, we find many species of animals identical with those which live at the present day, diminishing in numbers, it is true, but still existing, in a certain proportion, in the oldest of the Tertiary rocks. Furthermore, when we examine the rocks of the Cretaceous epoch, we find the remains of some

animals which the closest scrutiny cannot show to be, in any important respect, different from those which live at the present time. That is the case with one of the cretaceous lamp-shells (*Terebratula*) which has continued to exist unchanged, or with insignificant variations, down to the present day. Such is the case with the *Globigerinæ*, the skeletons of which, aggregated together, form a large proportion of our English chalk. Those *Globigerinæ* can be traced down to the *Globigerinæ* which live at the surface of the present great oceans, and the remains of which, falling to the bottom of the sea give rise to a chalky mud. Hence it must be admitted that certain existing species of animals show no distinct sign of modification, or transformation, in the course of a lapse of time as great as that which carries us back to the Cretaceous period; and which, whatever its absolute measure, is certainly vastly greater than thirty thousand years.

There are groups of species so closely allied together, that it needs the eye of a naturalist to distinguish them one from another. If we disregard the small differences which separate these forms, and consider all the species of such groups as modifications of one type, we shall find that, even among the higher animals, some types have had a marvellous duration. In the chalk, for example, there is found a fish belonging to the highest and the most differentiated group of osseous fishes, which goes by the name of *Beryx*. The remains of that fish are among the most beautiful and well-preserved of the fossils found in our English chalk. It can be studied anatomically, so far as the hard parts are concerned, almost as well as if it were a recent fish. But the genus *Beryx* is represented, at the present day, by very closely allied species which are living in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. We may go still farther back. I have already referred to the fact, that the Carboniferous formations, in Europe and in America, contain the remains of scorpions in an admirable state of preservation and,

that those scorpions are hardly distinguishable from such as now live. I do not mean to say that they are not different, but close scrutiny is needed in order to distinguish them from modern scorpions.

More than this. At the very bottom of the Silurian series, in beds which are by some authorities referred to the Cambrian formation, where the signs of life begin to fail us—even there, among the few and scanty animal remains which are discoverable, we find species of molluscos animals which are so closely allied to existing forms that, at one time, they were grouped under the same generic name. I refer to the well known *Lingula* of the *Lingula* flags, lately, in consequence of some slight differences, placed in the new genus *Lingulella*. Practically, it belongs to the same great generic group as the *Lingula*, which is to be found at the present day upon your own shores and those of many other parts of the world.

The same truth is exemplified if we turn to certain great periods of the earth's history—as, for example, the Mesozoic epoch. There are groups of reptiles, such as the *Ichthyosauria* and the *Plesiosauria*, which appear shortly after the commencement of this epoch, and they occur in vast numbers. They disappear with the chalk and, throughout the whole of the great series of Mesozoic rocks, they present no such modifications as can safely be considered evidence of progressive modification.

Facts of this kind are undoubtedly fatal to any form of the doctrine of evolution which postulates the supposition that there is an intrinsic necessity, on the part of animal forms which have once come into existence, to undergo continual modification; and they are as distinctly opposed to any view which involves the belief, that such modification as may occur, must take place, at the same rate, in all the different types of animal or vegetable life. The facts, as I have placed them before you obviously directly contradict any form of the hypothesis of evolution which stands in need of these two postulates.

But, one great service that has been rendered by Mr. Darwin to the doctrine of evolution in general is this: he has shown that there are two chief factors in the process of evolution: one of them is the tendency to vary, the existence of which in all living forms may be proved by observation; the other is the influence of surrounding conditions upon what I may call the parent form and the variations which are thus evolved from it. The cause of the production of variations is a matter not at all properly understood at present. Whether variation depends upon some intricate machinery—if I may use the phrase—of the living organism itself, or whether it arises through the influence of conditions upon that form, is not certain, and the question may, for the present, be left open. But the important point is that granting the existence of the tendency to the production of variations; then, whether the variations which are produced shall survive and supplant the parent, or whether the parent form shall survive and supplant the variations, is a matter which depends entirely on those conditions which give rise to the struggle for existence. If the surrounding conditions are such that the parent form is more competent to deal with them, and flourish in them than the derived forms, then, in the struggle for existence, the parent form will maintain itself and the derived forms will be exterminated. But if, on the contrary, the conditions are such as to be more favourable to a derived than to the parent form, the parent form will be extirpated and the derived form will take its place. In the first case, there will be no progression, no change of structure, through any imaginable series of ages; in the second place there will be modification of change and form.

Thus the existence of these persistent types, as I have termed them, is no real obstacle in the way of the theory of evolution. Take the case of the scorpions to which I have just referred. No doubt, since the Carboniferous epoch, conditions have always obtained, such as existed when the scorpions of that epoch

flourished; conditions in which scorpions find themselves better off, more competent to deal with the difficulties in their way, than any variation from the scorpion type which they may have produced; and, for that reason, the scorpion type has persisted, and has not been supplanted by any other form. And there is no reason, in the nature of things, why, as long as this world exists, if there be conditions more favourable to scorpions than to any variation which may arise from them, these forms of life should not persist.

Therefore, the stock objection to the hypothesis of evolution, based on the long duration of certain animal and vegetable types, is no objection at all. The facts of this character—and they are numerous—belong to that class of evidence which I have called indifferent. That is to say, they may afford no direct support to the doctrine of evolution, but they are capable of being interpreted in perfect consistency with it.

There is another order of facts belonging to the class of negative or indifferent evidence. The great group of Lizards, which abound in the present world, extends through the whole series of formations as far back as the Permian, or latest Palæozoic, epoch. These Permian lizards differ astonishingly little from the lizards which exist at the present day. Comparing the amount of the differences between them and modern lizards, with the prodigious lapse of time between the Permian epoch and the present age, it may be said that the amount of change is insignificant. But, when we carry our researches farther back in time, we find no trace of lizards, nor of any true reptile whatever, in the whole mass of formations beneath the Permian.

Now, it is perfectly clear that if our palæontological collections are to be taken, even approximately, as an adequate representation of all the forms of animals and plants that have ever lived; and if the record furnished by the known series of beds of stratified rock covers

the whole series of events which constitute the history of life on the globe, such a fact as this directly contravenes the hypothesis of evolution; because this hypothesis postulates that the existence of every form must have been preceded by that of some form little different from it. Here, however, we have to take into consideration that important truth so well insisted upon by Lyell and by Darwin—the imperfection of the geological record. It can be demonstrated that the geological record must be incomplete, that it can only preserve remains found in certain favourable localities and under particular conditions; that it must be destroyed by processes of denudation, and obliterated by processes of metamorphosis. Beds of rock of any thickness, crammed full of organic remains, may yet, either by the percolation of water through them, or by the influence of subterranean heat, lose all trace of these remains, and present the appearance of beds of rock formed under conditions in which living forms were absent. Such metamorphic rocks occur in formations of all ages; and, in various cases, there are very good grounds for the belief that they have contained organic remains, and that those remains have been absolutely obliterated.

I insist upon the defects of the geological record the more because those who have not attended to these matters are apt to say, “It is all very well, but, when you get into a difficulty with your theory of evolution, you appeal to the incompleteness and the imperfection of the geological record;” and I want to make it perfectly clear to you that this imperfection is a great fact, which must be taken into account in all our speculations, or we shall constantly be going wrong.

You see the singular series of footmarks, drawn of its natural size in the large diagram hanging up here (Fig. 2), which I owe to the kindness of my friend Professor Marsh, with whom I had the opportunity recently of visiting the

precise locality in Massachusetts in which these tracks occur. I am, therefore, able to give you my own testimony, if needed, that the diagram accurately represents what we saw. The valley of the Connecticut is classical ground for the geologist. It contains great beds of sandstone, covering many square miles, which have evidently formed a part of an ancient sea-shore, or, it may be, lake-shore. For a certain period of time after their deposition, these beds have remained sufficiently soft to receive the impressions of the feet of whatever animals walked over them, and to preserve them afterwards, in exactly the same way as such impressions are at this hour preserved on the shores of the Bay of Fundy and elsewhere. The diagram represents the track of some gigantic



FIG. 2.—TRACKS OF BRONTOZOOM.

animal, which walked on its hind legs. You see the series of marks made alternately by the right and by the left foot; so that, from one impression to the other of the three-toed foot on the same side, is one stride, and that stride, as we measured it, is six feet nine inches. I leave you, therefore, to form an impression of the magnitude of the creature which, as it walked along the ancient shore, made these impressions.

Of such impressions there are untold thousands upon these sandstones. Fifty or sixty different kinds have been discovered, and they cover vast areas. But, up to this present time, not a bone, not a fragment, of any one of the animals which left these great footmarks has been found; in fact, the only animal remains which have been met with in all these deposits, from the time of their discovery to the present day—though they have been carefully hunted over—is a fragmentary skeleton of one of the smaller

forms. What has become of the bones of all these animals? You see we are not dealing with little creatures, but with animals that make a step of six feet nine inches; and their remains must have been left somewhere. The probability is, that they have been dissolved away, and completely lost.

I have had occasion to work out the nature of fossil remains, of which there was nothing left except casts of the bones, the solid material of the skeleton having been dissolved out by percolating water. It was a chance, in this case, that the sandstone happened to be of such a constitution as to set, and to allow the bones to be afterward dissolved out, leaving cavities of the exact shape of the bones. Had that constitution been other than what it was, the bones

would have been dissolved, the layers of sandstone would have fallen together into one mass, and not the slightest indication that the animal had existed

would have been discoverable.

I know of no more striking evidence than these facts afford, of the caution which should be used in drawing the conclusion, from the absence of organic remains in a deposit, that animals or plants did not exist at the time it was formed. I believe that, with a right understanding of the doctrine of evolution on the one hand, and a just estimation of the importance of the imperfection of the geological record on the other, all difficulty is removed from the kind of evidence to which I have adverted; and that we are justified in believing that all such cases are examples of what I have designated negative or indifferent evidence—that is to say, they in no way directly advance the hypothesis of evolution, but they are not to be regarded as obstacles in the way of our belief in that doctrine.

I now pass on to the consideration of those cases which, for reasons which

I will point out to you by and by, are not to be regarded as demonstrative of the truth of evolution, but which are such as must exist if evolution be true, and which therefore are, upon the whole, evidence in favour of the doctrine. If the doctrine of evolution be true, it follows, that, however diverse the different groups of animals and of plants may be, they must all, at one time or other, have been connected by gradational forms; so that, from the highest animals, whatever they may be, down to the lowest speck of protoplasmic matter in which life can be manifested, a series of gradations, leading from one end of the series to the other, either exists or has existed. Undoubtedly that is a necessary postulate of the doctrine of evolution. But when we look upon living Nature as it is, we find a totally different state of things. We find that animals and plants fall into groups, the different members of which are pretty closely allied together, but which are separated by definite, larger or smaller, breaks, from other groups. In other words, no intermediate forms which bridge over these gaps or intervals are, at present, to be met with.

To illustrate what I mean: Let me call your attention to those vertebrate animals which are most familiar to you, such as mammals, birds, and reptiles. At the present day, these groups of animals are perfectly well-defined from one another. We know of no animal now living which, in any sense, is intermediate between the mammal and the bird, or between the bird and the reptile; but, on the contrary, there are many very distinct anatomical peculiarities, well-defined marks, by which the mammal is separated from the bird, and the bird from the reptile. The distinctions are obvious and striking if you compare the definitions of these great groups as they now exist.

The same may be said of many of the subordinate groups, or orders, into which these great classes are divided. At the present time, for example, there are

numerous forms of non-ruminant pachyderms, or what we may call broadly, the pig tribe, and many varieties of ruminants. These latter have their definite characteristics, and the former have their distinguishing peculiarities. But there is nothing that fills up the gap between the ruminants and the pig tribe. The two are distinct. Such also is the case in respect of the minor groups of the class of reptiles. The existing fauna shows us crocodiles, lizards, snakes, and tortoises; but no connecting link between the crocodile and lizard, nor between the lizard and snake, nor between the snake and the crocodile, nor between any two of these groups. They are separated by absolute breaks. If, then, it could be shown that this state of things had always existed, the fact would be fatal to the doctrine of evolution. If the intermediate gradations, which the doctrine of evolution requires to have existed between these groups, are not to be found anywhere in the records of the past history of the globe, their absence is a strong and weighty negative argument against evolution; while, on the other hand, if such intermediate forms are to be found, that is so much to the good of evolution; although for reasons which I will lay before you by and by, we must be cautious in our estimate of the evidential cogency of facts of this kind.

It is a very remarkable circumstance that, from the commencement of the serious study of fossil remains, in fact from the time when Cuvier began his brilliant researches upon those found in the quarries of Montmartre, palæontology has shown what she was going to do in this matter, and what kind of evidence it lay in her power to produce.

I said just now that, in the existing Fauna, the group of pig-like animals and the group of ruminants are entirely distinct; but one of the first of Cuvier's discoveries was an animal which he called the *Anoplotherium*, and which proved to be, in a great many important respects, intermediate in character between the pigs on the one hand, and

the ruminants on the other. Thus, research into the history of the past did, to a certain extent, tend to fill up the breach between the group of ruminants and the group of pigs. Another remarkable animal restored by the great French palæontologist, the *Palæotherium*, similarly tended to connect together animals to all appearance so different as the rhinoceros, the horse, and the tapir. Subsequent research has brought to light multitudes of facts of the same order; and, at the present day, the investigations of such anatomists as Rüttimeyer and Gaudry have tended to fill up, more and more, the gaps in our existing series of mammals, and to connect groups formerly thought to be distinct.

But I think it may have an especial interest if, instead of dealing with these examples, which would require a great deal of tedious osteological detail, I take the case of birds and reptiles; groups which, at the present day, are so clearly distinguished from one another that there are perhaps no classes of animals which, in popular apprehension, are more completely separated. Existing birds, as you are aware, are covered with feathers; their anterior extremities, specially and peculiarly modified, are converted into wings, by the aid of which most of them are able to fly; they walk upright upon two legs; and these limbs, when they are considered anatomically, present a great number of exceedingly remarkable peculiarities, to which I may have occasion to advert incidentally as I go on, and which are not met with, even approximately, in any existing forms of reptiles. On the other hand, existing reptiles have no feathers. They may have naked skins, or be covered with horny scales, or bony plates, or with both. They possess no wings; they neither fly by means of their fore-limbs, nor habitually walk upright upon their hind-limbs; and the bones of their legs present no such modifications as we find in birds. It is impossible to imagine any two groups more definitely and distinctly separated, notwithstanding certain

characters which they possess in common.

As we trace the history of birds back in time, we find their remains, sometimes in great abundance, throughout the whole extent of the tertiary rocks; but, so far as our present knowledge goes, the birds of the tertiary rocks retain the same essential characters as the birds of the present day. In other words, the tertiary birds come within the definition of the class constituted by existing birds, and are as much separated from reptiles as existing birds are. Not very long ago no remains of birds had been found below the tertiary rocks, and I am not sure but that some persons were prepared to demonstrate that they could not have existed at an earlier period. But, in the course of the last few years, such remains have been discovered in England; though, unfortunately, in so imperfect and fragmentary a condition, that it is impossible to say whether they differed from existing birds in any essential character or not. In your country the development of the cretaceous series of rocks is enormous; the conditions under which the later cretaceous strata have been deposited are highly favourable to the preservation of organic remains; and the researches, full of labour and risk, which have been carried on by Professor Marsh in these cretaceous rocks of Western America, have rewarded him with the discovery of forms of birds of which we had hitherto no conception. By his kindness, I am enabled to place before you a restoration of one of these extraordinary birds, every part of which can be thoroughly justified by the more or less complete skeletons, in a very perfect state of preservation, which he has discovered. This *Hesperornis* (Fig. 3), which measured between five and six feet in length, is astonishingly like our existing divers or grebes in a great many respects; so like them indeed that, had the skeleton of *Hesperornis* been found in a museum without its skull, it probably would have been placed in the same group of birds

as the divers and grebes of the present day.¹ But *Hesperornis* differs from all existing birds, and so far resembles reptiles, in one important particular—it is provided with teeth. The long jaws are armed with teeth which have curved crowns and thick roots (Fig. 4), and are not set in distinct sockets, but are lodged in a groove. In possessing true teeth, the *Hesperornis* differs from every existing bird, and from every bird yet discovered in the tertiary formations, the tooth-like serrations of the jaws in the *Odontopteryx* of the London clay being mere processes of the bony substance of the jaws, and not teeth in the proper sense of the word. In view of the characteristics of this bird we are therefore obliged to modify the definitions of the classes of birds and reptiles. Before the discovery of *Hesperornis*, the definition of the class Aves based upon our knowledge of existing birds might have been extended to all birds; it might have been said that the absence of teeth was characteristic of the class of birds; but the discovery of an animal which, in every part of its skeleton, closely agrees with existing birds, and yet possesses teeth, shows that there were ancient birds, which, in respect of possessing teeth, approached reptiles more nearly than any existing bird does,

¹ The absence of any keel on the breast-bone and some other osteological peculiarities, observed by Professor Marsh, however, suggest that *Hesperornis* may be a modification of a less specialised group of birds than that to which these existing aquatic birds belong.

and, to that extent, diminishes the hiatus between the two classes.

The same formation has yielded another bird *Ichthyornis* (Fig. 5), which also possesses teeth; but the teeth are situated in distinct sockets, while those of *Hesperornis* are not so lodged. The latter also has such very small, almost rudimentary wings, that it must have



FIG. 3.—*HESPERORNIS REGALIS* (Marsh).

been chiefly a swimmer and a diver like a Penguin; while *Ichthyornis* has strong wings and no doubt possessed corresponding powers of flight. *Ichthyornis* also differed in the fact that its vertebræ have not the peculiar characters of the vertebræ of existing and of all known tertiary birds, but were concave at each end. This discovery leads us to make a further modification in the definition of the group of birds, and to part with

another of the characters by which almost all existing birds are distinguished from reptiles.

Apart from the few fragmentary remains from the English greensand, to

exception of the Solenhofen slates. These so-called slates are composed of a fine grained calcareous mud which has hardened into lithographic stone, and in which organic remains are almost as well

preserved as they would be if they had been imbedded in so much plaster of Paris. They have yielded the *Archæopteryx*, the existence of which was first made known by the finding of a fossil feather, or rather of the impression of one. It is wonderful enough that such a perishable thing as a feather, and nothing more, should be discovered; yet for a long time, nothing was known of this bird except its feather. But by and by a solitary skeleton was discovered which is now in the British Museum. The skull of this solitary specimen is unfortunately wanting, and it is therefore uncertain whether the *Archæopteryx* possessed teeth or not.¹ But the remainder of the skeleton is so well preserved as to leave no doubt respecting the main features of the animal, which are very singular. The feet are not only altogether bird-like, but have the special characters of the feet of perching birds, while the body had a clothing of true feathers. Nevertheless, in some other respects, *Archæopteryx* is unlike a bird and like a reptile. There is a long tail composed of many vertebræ. The structure

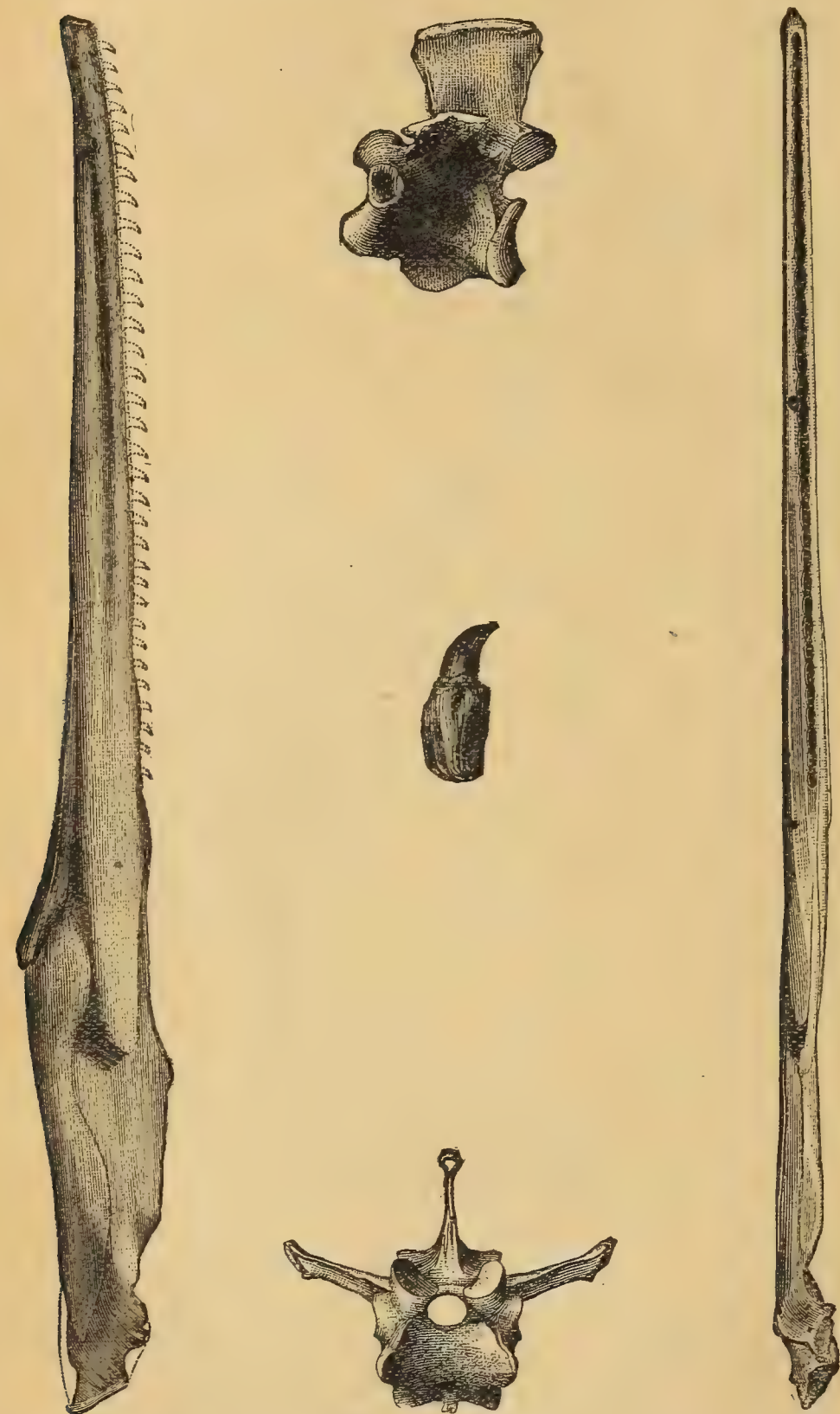


FIG. 4.—*HESPERORNIS REGALIS* (Marsh).

(Side and upper views of half the lower jaw; side and end views of a vertebra and a separate tooth.)

which I have referred, the Mesozoic rocks, older than those in which *Hesperornis* and *Ichthyornis* have been discovered have afforded no certain evidence of birds, with the remarkable

of the wing differs in some very re-

¹ A second specimen, discovered in 1877, and at present in the Berlin museum, shows an excellently preserved skull with teeth: and three digits, all terminated by claws, in the fore-limb. 1893.

markable respects from that which it presents in a true bird. In the latter, the end of the wing answers to the thumb and two fingers of my hand ; but the metacarpal bones, or those which answer to the bones of the fingers which lie in the palm of the hand, are fused together into one mass ; and the whole apparatus, except the last joints of the thumb, is bound up in a sheath of integument, while the edge of the hand carries the principal quill feathers. In the *Archæopteryx*, the upper-arm bone is like that of a bird ; and the two bones of the forearm are more or less like those of a bird, but the fingers are not bound together—they are free. What their number may have been is uncertain ; but several, if not all, of them were terminated by strong curved claws, not like such as are sometimes found in birds, but such as reptiles possess ; so that, in the *Archæopteryx*, we have an animal which, to a certain extent, occupies a midway place between a bird and a reptile. It is a bird so far as its foot and sundry other parts of its skeleton are concerned ; it is essentially and thoroughly a bird by its feathers ; but it is much more properly a reptile in the fact that the region which represents the hand has separate bones, with claws resembling those which terminate the forelimb of a reptile. Moreover, it had a long reptile-like tail with a fringe of feathers on each side ; while, in all true birds hitherto known, the tail is relatively short, and the vertebræ which

constitute its skeleton are generally peculiarly modified.

Like the *Anoplotherium* and the *Palæotherium*, therefore, *Archæopteryx* tends to fill up the interval between

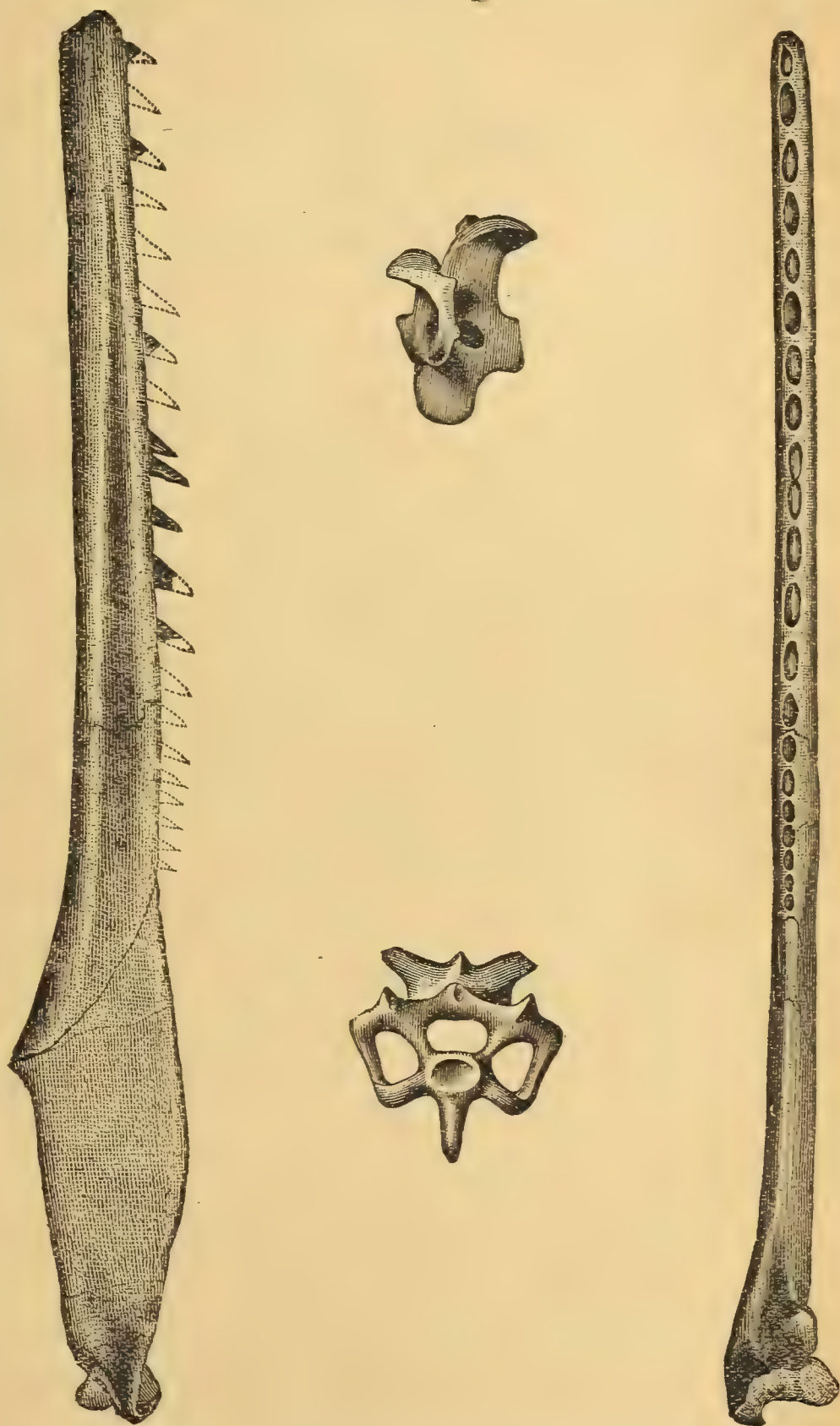


FIG. 5.—*ICHTHYORNIS DISPAR* (Marsh).

(Side and upper views of half the lower jaw ; and side and end views of a vertebra.)

groups which, in the existing world, are widely separated, and to destroy the value of the definitions of zoological groups based upon our knowledge of existing forms. And such cases as

these constitute evidence in favour of evolution, in so far as they prove that, in former periods of the world's history, there were animals which overstepped the bounds of existing groups, and tended to merge them into larger assemblages. They show that animal organisation is more flexible than our knowledge of recent forms might have led us to believe; and that many structural permutations and combinations, of which the present world gives us no indication, may nevertheless have existed.

But it by no means follows, because the *Palæotherium* has much in common with the horse, on the one hand, and with the rhinoceros on the other, that it is the intermediate form through which rhinoceroses have passed to become horses, or *vice versa*; on the contrary, any such supposition would certainly be erroneous. Nor do I think it likely that the transition from the reptile to the bird has been effected by such a form as *Archæopteryx*. And it is convenient to distinguish these intermediate forms between two groups, which do not represent the actual passage from the one group to the other, as *intercalary* types, from those *linear* types which, more or less approximately, indicate the nature of the steps by which the transition from one group to the other was effected.

I conceive that such linear forms, constituting a series of natural gradations between the reptile and the bird, and enabling us to understand the manner in which the reptilian has been metamorphosed into the bird type, are really to be found among a group of ancient and extinct terrestrial reptiles known as the *Ornithoscelida*. The remains of these animals occur throughout the series of Mesozoic formations, from the Trias to the Chalk, and there are indications of their existence even in the later Palæozoic strata.

Most of these reptiles, at present known, are of great size, some having attained a length of forty feet or perhaps

more. The majority resembled lizards and crocodiles in their general form, and many of them were, like crocodiles, protected by an armour of heavy bony plates. But, in others, the hind-limbs elongate and the fore-limbs shorten, until their relative proportions approach those which are observed in the short-winged, flightless, ostrich tribe among birds.

The skull is relatively light, and in some cases the jaws, though bearing teeth, are beak-like at their extremities and appear to have been enveloped in a horny sheath. In the part of the vertebral column which lies between the haunch bones and is called the sacrum, a number of vertebræ may unite together into one whole, and in this respect, as in some details of its structure, the sacrum of these reptiles approaches that of birds.

But it is in the structure of the pelvis and of the hind limb that some of these ancient reptiles present the most remarkable approximation to birds, and clearly indicate the way by which the most specialised and characteristic features of the bird may have been evolved from the corresponding parts in the reptile.

In Fig. 6, the pelvis and hind-limbs of a crocodile, a three-toed bird, and an ornithoscelidan are represented side by side; and, for facility of comparison, in corresponding positions; but it must be recollected that, while the position of the bird's limb is natural, that of the crocodile is not so. In the bird, the thigh-bone lies close to the body, and the metatarsal bones of the foot (ii., iii., iv., Fig. 6) are, ordinarily, raised into a more or less vertical position; in the crocodile, the thigh-bone stands out at an angle from the body, and the metatarsal bones (i., ii., iii., iv., Fig. 6) lie flat on the ground. Hence, in the crocodile, the body usually lies squat between the legs, while, in the bird, it is raised upon the hind legs, as upon pillars.

In the crocodile, the pelvis is obviously composed of three bones on

each side: the ilium (*Il.*), the pubis (*Pb.*), and the ischium (*Is.*). In the adult bird there appears to be but one bone on each side. The examination of the pelvis of a chick, however, shows that each half is made up of three bones, which answer to those which remain distinct throughout life in the crocodile. There is, therefore, a fundamental identity of plan in the construction of the pelvis of both bird and reptile; though the difference in form, relative size, and

lower end diminishes to a point. The tibia has a strong crest at its upper end and its lower extremity passes into a broad pulley. There seem at first to be no tarsal bones; and only one bone, divided at the end into three heads for the three toes which are attached to it, appears in the place of the metatarsus.

In a young bird, however, the pulley-shaped apparent end of the tibia is a distinct bone, which represents the bones marked *As.*, *Ca.*, in the crocodile;

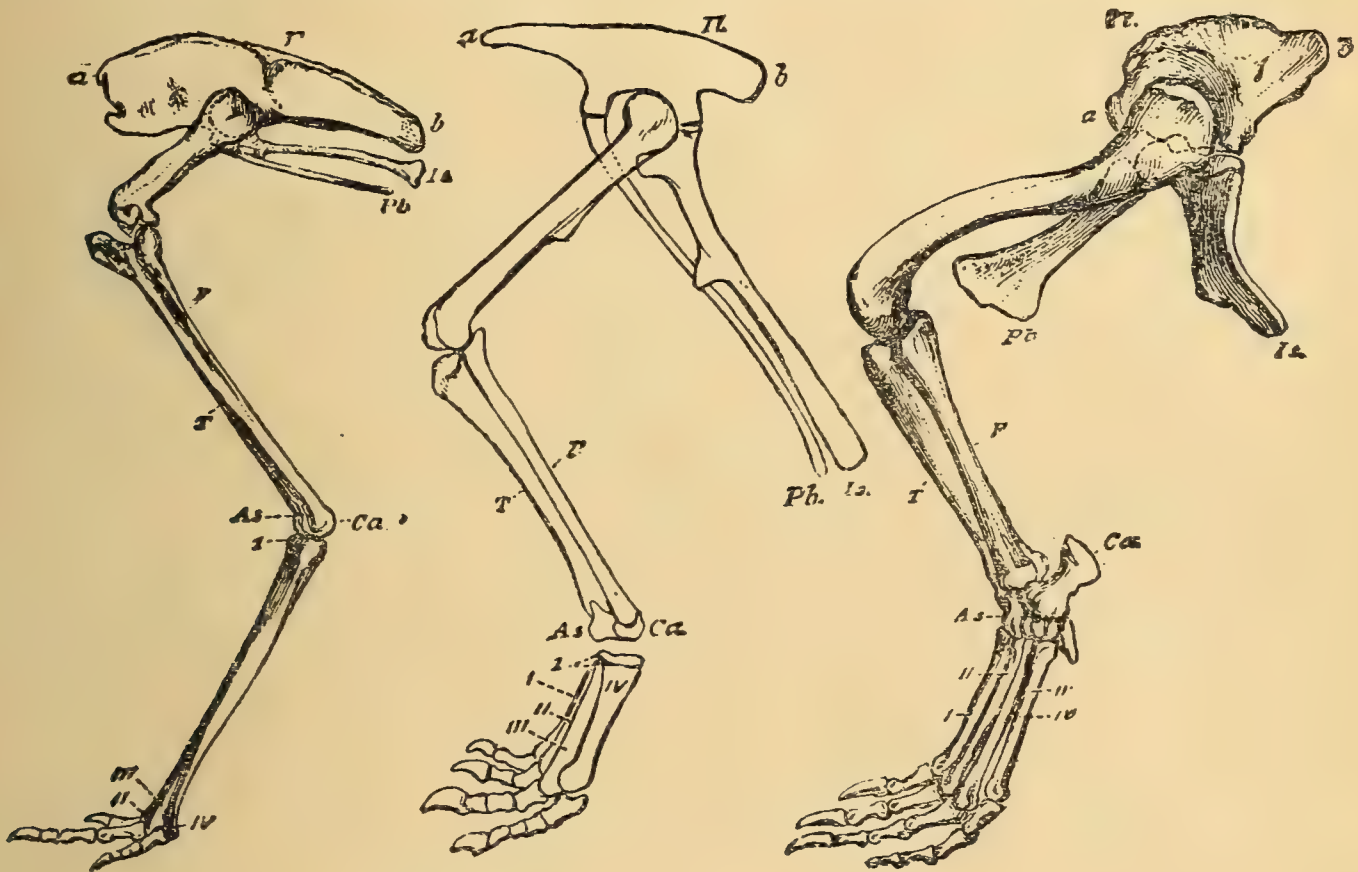


FIG. 6.—BIRD.

ORNITHOSCELIDAN.

CROCODILE.

(The letters have the same signification in all the figures. *Il.*, Ilium; *a*, anterior end; *b*, posterior end; *Is.*, ischium; *Pb.*, pubis; *T.*, tibia; *F.*, fibula; *As.*, astragalus; *Ca.*, calcaneum; *i*, distal portion of the tarsus; *i.*, *ii.*, *iii.*, *iv.*, metatarsal bones.)

direction of the corresponding bones in the two cases are very great.

But the most striking contrast between the two lies in the bones of the leg and of that part of the foot termed the tarsus, which follows upon the leg. In the crocodile, the fibula (*F.*) is relatively large and its lower end is complete. The tibia (*T.*) has no marked crest at its upper end, and its lower end is narrow and not pulley-shaped. There are two rows of separate tarsal bones (*As.*, *Ca.*, &c.) and four distinct metatarsal bones, with a rudiment of a fifth.

In the bird the fibula is small and its

while the apparently single metatarsal bone consists of three bones, which early unite with one another and with an additional bone, which represents the lower row of bones in the tarsus of the crocodile.

In other words it can be shown by the study of development that the bird's pelvis and hind limb are simply extreme modifications of the same fundamental plan as that upon which these parts are modelled in reptiles.

On comparing the pelvis and hind limb of the ornithoscelidan with that of the crocodile, on the one side, and that

of the bird, on the other (Fig. 6), it is obvious that it represents a middle term between the two. The pelvic bones approach the form of those of the birds, and the direction of the pubis and ischium is nearly that which is characteristic of birds; the thigh bone, from the direction of its head, must have lain close to the body; the tibia has a great crest; and, immovably fitted on to its lower end, there is a pulley-shaped bone, like that of the bird, but remaining distinct. The lower end of the fibula is much more slender, proportionally, than in the crocodile. The metatarsal



FIG. 7.—RESTORATION OF COMPSOGNATHUS LONGIPES.

bones have such a form that they fit together immovably, though they do not enter into bony union; the third toe is, as in the bird, longest and strongest. In fact, the ornithoscelidan limb is comparable to that of an unhatched chick.

Taking all these facts together, it is obvious that the view, which was entertained by Mantell and the probability of which was demonstrated by your own distinguished anatomist, Leidy, while much additional evidence in the same direction has been furnished by Professor Cope, that some of these animals

may have walked upon their hind legs, as birds do, acquires great weight. In fact, there can be no reasonable doubt that one of the smaller forms of the *Ornithoscelida*, *Compsognathus*, the almost entire skeleton of which has been discovered in the Solenhofen slates, was a bipedal animal. The parts of this skeleton are somewhat twisted out of their natural relations, but the accompanying figure gives a just view of the general form of *Compsognathus* and of the proportions of its limbs; which, in some respects, are more completely bird-like than those of other *Ornithoscelida*.

We have had to stretch the definition of the class of birds so as to include birds with teeth and birds with paw-like forelimbs and long tails. There is no evidence that *Compsognathus* possessed feathers; but, if it did, it would be hard indeed to say whether it should be called a reptilian bird or an avian reptile.

As *Compsognathus* walked upon its hind legs, it must have made tracks like those of birds. And as the structure of the limbs of several of the gigantic *Ornithoscelida*, such as *Iguanodon*, leads to the conclusion that they also may have constantly, or occasionally, assumed the same attitude, a peculiar interest attaches to the fact that, in the Wealden strata of England, there are to be found gigantic footsteps, arranged in order like those of the *Brontozoum*, and which there can be no reasonable doubt were made by some of the *Ornithoscelida*, the remains of which are found in the same rocks. And, knowing that reptiles that walked upon their hind legs and shared many of the anatomical characters of birds did once exist, it becomes a very important question whether the tracks in the Trias of Massachusetts, to which I referred some time ago, and which formerly used to be unhesitatingly ascribed to birds, may not all have been made by Ornithoscelidan reptiles; and whether, if we could obtain the skeletons of the animals which made these tracks, we should not find in them the actual steps of the evo-

lutional process by which reptiles gave rise to birds.

The evidential value of the facts I have brought forward in this Lecture must be neither over nor under estimated. It is not historical proof of the occurrence or the evolution of birds from reptiles, for we have no safe ground for assuming that true birds had not made their appearance at the commencement of the Mesozoic epoch. It is in fact, quite possible that all these more or less avi-form reptiles of the Mesozoic epoch are not terms in the series of progression from birds to reptiles at all, but simply the more or less modified descendants of Palæozoic forms through which that transition was actually effected.

We are not in a position to say that the known *Ornithoscelida* are intermediate in the order of their appearance on the earth between reptiles and birds. All that can be said is that, if independent evidence of the actual occurrence of evolution is producible, then these intercalary forms remove every difficulty in the way of understanding what the actual steps of the process, in the case of birds, may have been.

That intercalary forms should have existed in ancient times is a necessary consequence of the truth of the hypothesis of evolution; and, hence, the evidence I have laid before you in proof of the existence of such forms, is, so far as it goes, in favour of that hypothesis.

There is another series of extinct reptiles which may be said to be intercalary between reptiles and birds, in so far as they combine some of the characters of both these groups; and which, as they

possessed the power of flight, may seem, at first sight, to be nearer representatives of the forms by which the transition from the reptile to the bird was effected, than the *Ornithoscelida*.

These are the *Pterosauria*, or Pterodactyles, the remains of which are met with throughout the series of Mesozoic rocks, from the lias to the chalk, and some

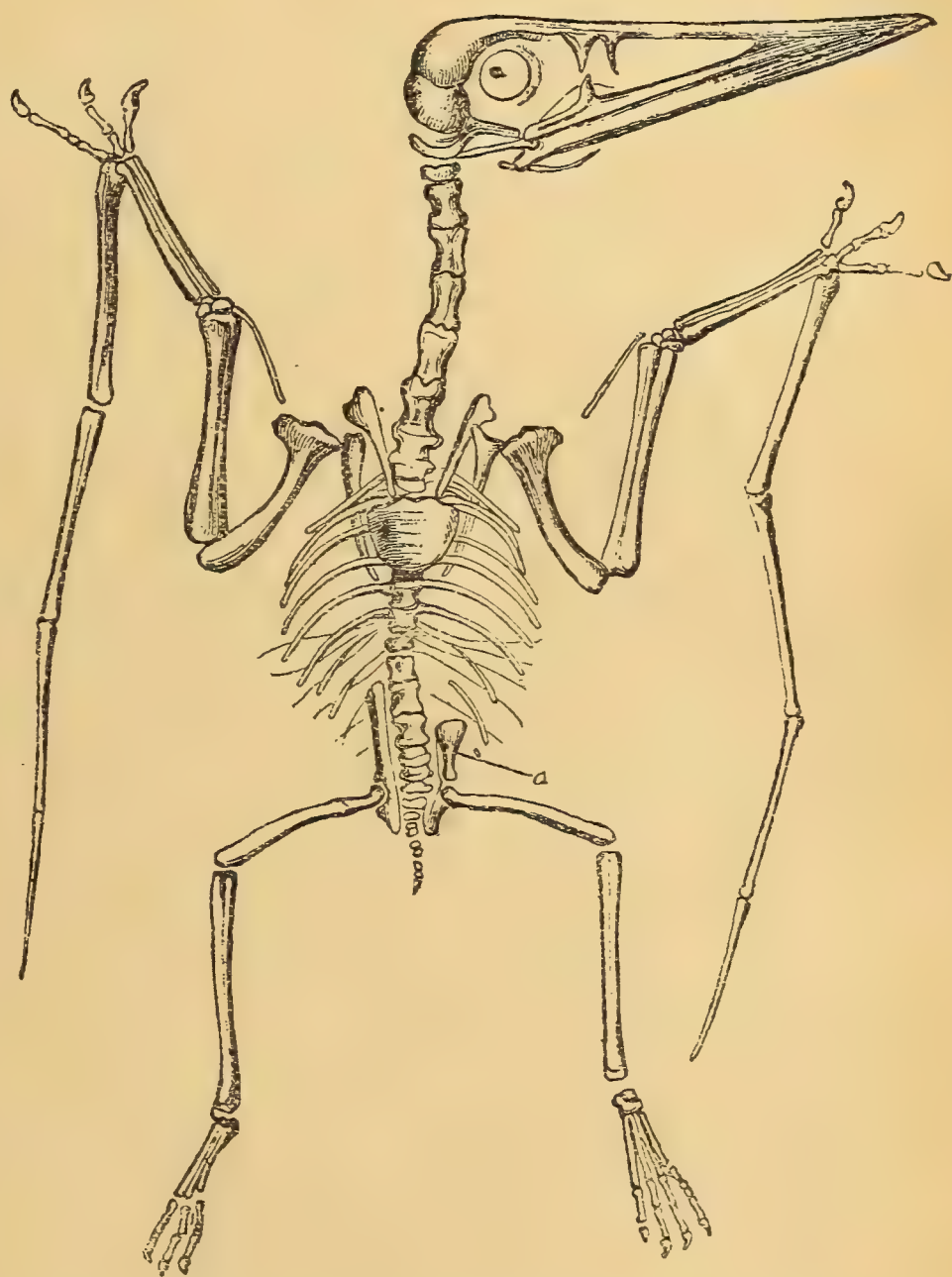


FIG. 8.—PTERODACTYLUS SPECTABILIS (Von Meyer).

of which attain a great size, their wings having a span of eighteen or twenty feet. These animals, in the form and proportions of the head and neck relatively to the body, and in the fact that the ends of the jaws were often, if not always, more or less extensively ensheathed in horny beaks, remind us of birds. Moreover, their bones contained air cavities, rendering

them specifically lighter, as is the case in most birds. The breast-bone was large and keeled, as in most birds and in bats, and the shoulder girdle is strikingly similar to that of ordinary birds. But it seems to me that the special resemblance of pterodactyles to birds ends here, unless I may add the entire absence of teeth which characterises the great pterodactyles (*Pteranodon*) discovered by Professor Marsh. All other known pterodactyles have teeth lodged in sockets. In the vertebral column and the hind-limbs there are no special resemblances to birds, and when we turn to the wings they are found to be constructed on a totally different principle from those of birds.

There are four fingers. These four fingers are large, and three of them, those which answer to the thumb and two following fingers in my hand—are terminated by claws, while the fourth is enormously prolonged and converted into a great jointed style. You see at once, from what I have stated about a bird's wing, that there could be nothing less like a bird's wing than this is. It was concluded by general reasoning that this finger had the office of supporting a web which extended between it and the body. An existing specimen proves that such was really the case, and that the pterodactyles were devoid of feathers, but that the fingers supported a vast web like that of a bat's wing; in fact, there can be no doubt that this ancient reptile flew after the fashion of a bat.

Thus, though the pterodactyle is a reptile which has become modified in such a manner as to enable it to fly, and therefore, as might be expected, presents some points of resemblance to other animals which fly; it has, so to speak, gone off the line which leads directly from reptiles to birds, and has become disqualified for the changes which lead to the characteristic organisation of the latter class. Therefore, viewed in relation to the classes of reptiles and birds, the pterodactyles appear to me to be, in a limited sense, intercalary forms; but

they are not even approximately linear, in the sense of exemplifying those modifications of structure through which the passage from the reptile to the bird took place.

III

THE DEMONSTRATIVE EVIDENCE OF EVOLUTION

THE occurrence of historical facts is said to be demonstrated, when the evidence that they happened is of such a character as to render the assumption that they did not happen in the highest degree improbable; and the question I now have to deal with is, whether evidence in favour of the evolution of animals of this degree of cogency is, or is not, obtainable from the record of the succession of living forms which is presented to us by fossil remains.

Those who have attended to the progress of palæontology are aware that evidence of the character which I have defined has been produced in considerable and continually-increasing quantity during the last few years. Indeed, the amount and the satisfactory nature of that evidence are somewhat surprising, when we consider the conditions under which alone we can hope to obtain it.

It is obviously useless to seek for such evidence except in localities in which the physical conditions have been such as to permit of the deposit of an unbroken, or but rarely interrupted, series of strata through a long period of time; in which the group of animals to be investigated has existed in such abundance as to furnish the requisite supply of remains; and in which, finally, the materials composing the strata are such as to ensure the preservation of these remains in a tolerably perfect and undisturbed state.

It so happens that the case which, at present, most nearly fulfils all these conditions is that of the series of extinct animals which culminates in the horses; by which term I mean to denote not merely the domestic animals with which

we are all so well acquainted, but their allies, the ass, zebra, quagga, and the like. In short, I use "horses" as the equivalent of the technical name *Equidæ*, which is applied to the whole group of existing equine animals.

The horse is in many ways a remarkable animal; not least so in the fact that it presents us with an example of one of the most perfect pieces of machinery in the living world. In truth, among the works of human ingenuity it cannot be said that there is any locomotive so perfectly adapted to its purposes, doing so much work with so small a quantity of fuel, as this machine of Nature's manufacture—the horse. And, as a necessary consequence of any sort of perfection, of mechanical perfection as of others, you find that the horse is a beautiful creature, one of the most beautiful of all land animals. Look at the perfect balance of its form, and the rhythm and force of its action. The locomotive machinery is, as you are aware, resident in its slender fore and hind limbs; they are flexible and elastic levers, capable of being moved by very powerful muscles; and, in order to supply the engines which work these levers with the force which they expend, the horse is provided with a very perfect apparatus for grinding its food and extracting therefrom the requisite fuel.

Without attempting to take you very far into the region of osteological detail, I must nevertheless trouble you with some statements respecting the anatomical structure of the horse; and, more especially, will it be needful to obtain a general conception of the structure of its fore and hind limbs, and of its teeth. But I shall only touch upon those points which are absolutely essential to our inquiry.

Let us turn in the first place to the fore-limb. In most quadrupeds, as in ourselves, the fore-arm contains distinct bones called the radius and the ulna. The corresponding region in the horse seems at first to possess but one bone. Careful observation, however, enables

us to distinguish in this bone a part which clearly answers to the upper end of the ulna. This is closely united with the chief mass of the bone which represents the radius, and runs out into a slender shaft which may be traced for some distance downwards upon the back of the radius, and then in most cases thins out and vanishes. It takes still more trouble to make sure of what is nevertheless the fact, that a small part of the lower end of the bone of the horse's fore-arm, which is only distinct in a very young foal, is really the lower extremity of the ulna.

What is commonly called the knee of a horse is its wrist. The "cannon bone" answers to the middle bone of the five metacarpal bones, which support the palm of the hand in ourselves. The "pastern," "coronary," and "coffin" bones of veterinarians answer to the joints of our middle fingers, while the hoof is simply a greatly enlarged and thickened nail. But if what lies below the horse's "knee" thus corresponds to the middle finger in ourselves, what has become of the four other fingers or digits? We find in the places of the second and fourth digits only two slender splint-like bones, about two-thirds as long as the cannon-bone, which gradually taper to their lower ends and bear no finger joints, or, as they are termed, phalanges. Sometimes, small bony or gristly nodules are to be found at the bases of these two metacarpal splints, and it is probable that these represent rudiments of the first and fifth toes. Thus, the part of the horse's skeleton which corresponds with that of the human hand contains one overgrown middle digit, and at least two imperfect lateral digits; and these answer, respectively, to the third, the second, and the fourth fingers in man.

Corresponding modifications are found in the hind limb. In ourselves, and in most quadrupeds, the leg contains two distinct bones, a large bone, the tibia, and a smaller and more slender bone, the fibula. But, in the horse, the fibula

seems, at first, to be reduced to its upper end ; a short slender bone united with the tibia, and ending in a point below, occupying its place. Examination of the lower end of a young foal's shin-bone, however, shows a distinct portion of osseous matter, which is the lower end of the fibula ; so that the apparently single lower end of the shin-bone is really made up of the coalesced ends of the tibia and fibula, just as the apparently single lower end of the fore-arm bone is composed of the coalesced radius and ulna.

The heel of the horse is the part commonly known as the hock. The hinder cannon-bone answers to the middle metatarsal bone of the human foot, the pastern, coronary, and coffin bones, to the middle toe bones ; the hind hoof to the nail, as in the fore-foot. And, as in the fore-foot, there are merely two splints to represent the second and the fourth toes. Sometimes a rudiment of a fifth toe appears to be traceable.

The teeth of a horse are not less peculiar than its limbs. The living engine, like all others, must be well stoked if it is to do its work ; and the horse, if it is to make good its wear and tear, and to exert the enormous amount of force required for its propulsion, must be well and rapidly fed. To this end, good cutting instruments and powerful and lasting crushers are needful. Accordingly, the twelve cutting teeth of a horse are close-set and concentrated in the fore-part of its mouth, like so many adzes or chisels. The grinders or molars are large, and have an extremely complicated structure, being composed of a number of different substances of unequal hardness. The consequence of this is that they wear away at different rates ; and, hence, the surface of each grinder is always as uneven as that of a good millstone.

I have said that the structure of the grinding teeth is very complicated, the harder and the softer parts being, as it were, interlaced with one another. The result of this is that, as the tooth wears,

the crown presents a peculiar pattern, the nature of which is not very easily deciphered at first ; but which it is important we should understand clearly. Each grinding tooth of the upper jaw has an *outer wall* so shaped that, on the worn crown, it exhibits the form of two crescents, one in front and one behind, with their concave sides turned outwards. From the inner side of the front crescent, a crescentic *front ridge* passes inwards and backwards, and its inner face enlarges into a strong longitudinal fold or *pillar*. From the front part of the hinder crescent, a *back ridge* takes a like direction, and also has its *pillar*.

The deep interspaces or *valleys* between these ridges and the outer wall are filled by bony substance, which is called *cement*, and coats the whole tooth.

The pattern of the worn face of each grinding tooth of the lower jaw is quite different. It appears to be formed of two crescent-shaped ridges, the convexities of which are turned outwards. The free extremity of each crescent has a *pillar*, and there is a large double *pillar* where the two crescents meet. The whole structure is, as it were, imbedded in cement, which fills up the valleys, as in the upper grinders.

If the grinding faces of an upper and of a lower molar of the same side are applied together, it will be seen that the apposed ridges are nowhere parallel, but that they frequently cross ; and that thus, in the act of mastication, a hard surface in the one is constantly applied to a soft surface in the other, and *vice versa*. They thus constitute a grinding apparatus of great efficiency, and one which is repaired as fast as it wears, owing to the long-continued growth of the teeth.

Some other peculiarities of the dentition of the horse must be noticed, as they bear upon what I shall have to say by and by. Thus the crowns of the cutting teeth have a peculiar deep pit, which gives rise to the well-known "mark" of the horse. There is a large

space between the outer incisors and the front grinder. In this space the adult male horse presents, near the incisors on each side, above and below, a canine or "tush," which is commonly absent in mares. In a young horse, moreover, there is not unfrequently to be seen in front of the first grinder, a very small tooth, which soon falls out. If this small tooth be counted as one, it will be found that there are seven teeth behind the canine on each side; namely, the small tooth in question, and the six great grinders, among which, by an unusual peculiarity, the foremost tooth is rather larger than those which follow it.

I have now enumerated those characteristic structures of the horse which are of most importance for the purpose we have in view.

To any one who is acquainted with the morphology of vertebrated animals, they show that the horse deviates widely from the general structure of mammals; and that the horse type is, in many respects, an extreme modification of the general mammalian plan. The least modified mammals, in fact, have the radius and ulna, the tibia and fibula, distinct and separate. They have five distinct and complete digits on each foot, and no one of these digits is very much larger than the rest. Moreover, in the least modified mammals, the total number of the teeth is very generally forty-four, while in horses, the usual number is forty, and in the absence of the canines, it may be reduced to thirty-six; the incisor teeth are devoid of the fold seen in those of the horse: the grinders regularly diminish in size from the middle of the series to its front end; while their crowns are short, early attain their full length, and exhibit simple ridges or tubercles, in place of the complex foldings of the horse's grinders.

Hence the general principles of the hypothesis of evolution lead to the conclusion that the horse must have been derived from some quadruped which possessed five complete digits on each foot; which had the bones of the fore-

arm and of the leg complete and separate; and which possessed forty-four teeth, among which the crowns of the incisors and grinders had a simple structure; while the latter gradually increased in size from before backwards, at any rate in the anterior part of the series, and had short crowns.

And if the horse has been thus evolved, and the remains of the different stages of its evolution have been preserved, they ought to present us with a series of forms in which the number of the digits becomes reduced; the bones of the fore-arm and leg gradually take on the equine condition; and the form and arrangement of the teeth successively approximate to those which obtain in existing horses.

Let us turn to the facts, and see how far they fulfil these requirements of the doctrine of evolution.

In Europe abundant remains of horses are found in the Quaternary and later Tertiary strata as far as the Pliocene formation. But these horses, which are so common in the cave-deposits and in the gravels of Europe, are in all essential respects like existing horses. And that is true of all the horses of the latter part of the Pliocene epoch. But, in deposits which belong to the earlier Pliocene and later Miocene epochs, and which occur in Britain, in France, in Germany, in Greece, in India, we find animals which are extremely like horses—which, in fact, are so similar to horses, that you may follow descriptions given in works upon the anatomy of the horse upon the skeletons of these animals—but which differ in some important particulars. For example, the structure of their fore and hind limbs is somewhat different. The bones which, in the horse, are represented by two splints, imperfect below, are as long as the middle metacarpal and metatarsal bones; and, attached to the extremity of each, is a digit with three joints of the same general character as those of the middle digit, only very much smaller. These small digits are so disposed that they could have had

but very little functional importance, and they must have been rather of the nature of the dew-claws, such as are to be found in many ruminant animals. The *Hipparion*, as the extinct European three-toed horse is called, in fact, presents a foot similar to that of the American *Protohippus* (Fig. 9), except that, in the *Hipparion*, the smaller digits are situated farther back, and are of smaller proportional size, than in the *Protohippus*.

The ulna is slightly more distinct than in the horse; and the whole length of it, as a very slender shaft, intimately united with the radius, is completely traceable. The fibula appears to be in the same condition as in the horse. The teeth of the *Hipparion* are essentially similar to those of the horse, but the pattern of the grinders is in some respects a little more complex, and there is a depression on the face of the skull in front of the orbit, which is not seen in existing horses.

In the earlier Miocene, and perhaps the later Eocene deposits of some parts of Europe, another extinct animal has been discovered, which Cuvier, who first described some fragments of it, considered to be a *Palæotherium*. But as further discoveries threw new light upon its structure, it was recognised as a distinct genus, under the name of *Anchitherium*.

In its general characters, the skeleton of *Anchitherium* is very similar to that of the horse. In fact, Lartet and De Blainville called it *Palæotherium equinum* or *hippoides*; and De Christol, in 1847, said that it differed from *Hipparion* in little more than the characters of its teeth, and gave it the name of *Hipparitherium*. Each foot possesses three complete toes; while the lateral toes are much larger in proportion to the middle toe than in *Hipparion*, and doubtless rested on the ground in ordinary locomotion.

The ulna is complete and quite distinct from the radius, though firmly united with the latter. The fibula seems also to have been complete. Its lower

end, though intimately united with that of the tibia, is clearly marked off from the latter bone.

There are forty-four teeth. The incisors have no strong pit. The canines seem to have been well developed in both sexes. The first of the seven grinders, which, as I have said, is frequently absent, and, when it does exist, is small in the horse, is a good-sized and permanent tooth, while the grinder which follows it is but little larger than the hinder ones. The crowns of the grinders are short, and though the fundamental pattern of the horse-tooth is discernible, the front and back ridges are less curved, the accessory pillars are wanting, and the valleys, much shallower, are not filled up with cement.

Seven years ago, when I happened to be looking critically into the bearing of palæontological facts upon the doctrine of evolution, it appeared to me that the *Anchitherium*, the *Hipparion*, and the modern horses, constitute a series in which the modifications of structure coincide with the order of chronological occurrence, in the manner in which they must coincide, if the modern horses really are the result of the gradual metamorphosis, in the course of the Tertiary epoch, of a less specialised ancestral form. And I found by correspondence with the late eminent French anatomist and palæontologist, M. Lartet, that he had arrived at the same conclusion from the same data.

That the *Anchitherium* type had become metamorphosed into the *Hipparion* type, and the latter into the *Equine* type, in the course of that period of time which is represented by the latter half of the Tertiary deposits, seemed to me to be the only explanation of the facts for which there was even a shadow of probability.¹

¹ I use the word "type" because it is highly probable that many forms of *Anchitherium*-like and *Hipparion*-like animals existed in the Miocene and Pliocene epochs, just as many species of the horse tribe exist now; and it is highly improbable that the particular species of *Anchitherium* or *Hipparion*, which happen to have been

And, hence, I have ever since held that these facts afford evidence of the occurrence of evolution, which, in the sense already defined, may be termed demonstrative.

All who have occupied themselves with the structure of *Anchitherium*, from Cuvier onwards, have acknowledged its many points of likeness to a well-known genus of extinct Eocene mammals, *Palæotherium*. Indeed, as we have seen, Cuvier regarded his remains of *Anchitherium* as those of a species of *Palæotherium*. Hence, in attempting to trace the pedigree of the horse beyond the Miocene epoch and the Anchitheroid form, I naturally sought among the various species of Palæotheroid animals for its nearest ally, and I was led to conclude that the *Palæotherium minus* (*Plagiolophus*) represented the next step more nearly than any form then known.

I think that this opinion was fully justifiable; but the progress of investigation has thrown an unexpected light on the question, and has brought us much nearer than could have been anticipated to a knowledge of the true series of the progenitors of the horse.

You are all aware that, when your country was first discovered by Europeans, there were no traces of the existence of the horse in any part of the American continent. The accounts of the conquest of Mexico dwell upon the astonishment of the natives of that country when they first became acquainted with that astounding phenomenon—a man seated upon a horse. Nevertheless, the investigations of American geologists have proved that the remains of horses occur in the most superficial deposits of both North and South America, just as they do in Europe. Therefore, for some reason or other—no feasible suggestion on that subject, so far as I know, has been made—the horse must have died out on this continent at some period preceding the

discovered, should be precisely those which have formed part of the direct line of the horse's pedigree.

discovery of America. Of late years there has been discovered in your Western Territories that marvellous accumulation of deposits, admirably adapted for the preservation of organic remains, to which I referred the other evening, and which furnishes us with a consecutive series of records of the fauna of the older half of the Tertiary epoch, for which we have no parallel in Europe. They have yielded fossils in an excellent state of conservation and in unexampled number and variety. The researches of Leidy and others have shown that forms allied to the *Hipparion* and the *Anchitherium* are to be found among these remains. But it is only recently that the admirably conceived and most thoroughly and patiently worked-out investigations of Professor Marsh have given us a just idea of the vast fossil wealth, and of the scientific importance, of these deposits. I have had the advantage of glancing over the collections in Yale Museum; and I can truly say that, so far as my knowledge extends, there is no collection from any one region and series of strata comparable, for extent, or for the care with which the remains have been got together, or for their scientific importance, to the series of fossils which he has deposited there. This vast collection has yielded evidence bearing upon the question of the pedigree of the horse of the most striking character. It tends to show that we must look to America, rather than to Europe, for the original seat of the equine series; and that the archaic forms and successive modifications of the horse's ancestry are far better preserved here than in Europe.

Professor Marsh's kindness has enabled me to put before you a diagram, every figure in which is an actual representation of some specimen which is to be seen at Yale at this present time (Fig. 9).

The succession of forms which he has brought together carries us from the top to the bottom of the Tertiaries. Firstly, there is the true horse. Next we have the American Pliocene form of the horse

(*Pliohippus*); in the conformation of its limbs it presents some very slight deviations from the ordinary horse, and the crowns of the grinding teeth are shorter.

referred. But it is more valuable than the European *Hipparion*, for the reason that it is devoid of some of the peculiarities of that form—peculiarities which

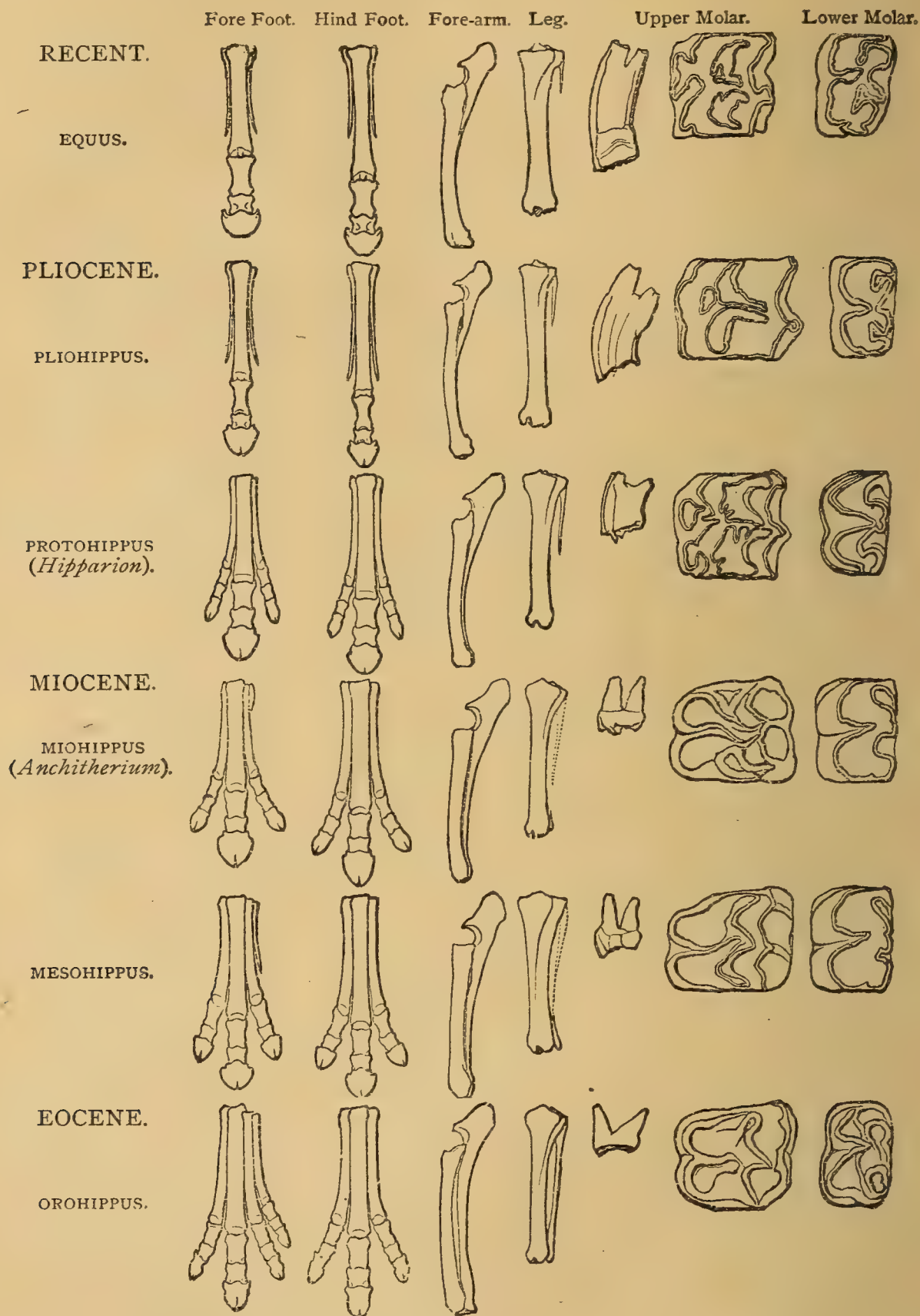


FIG. 9.

Then comes the *Protohippus*, which represents the European *Hipparion*, having one large digit and two small ones on each foot, and the general characters of the fore-arm and leg to which I have

tend to show that the European *Hipparion* is rather a member of a collateral branch, than a form in the direct line of succession. Next, in the backward order in time, is the *Miohippus*, which corre-

sponds pretty nearly with the *Anchitherium* of Europe. It presents three complete toes—one large median and two smaller lateral ones; and there is a rudiment of that digit, which answers to the little finger of the human hand.

The European record of the pedigree of the horse stops here; in the American Tertiaries, on the contrary, the series of ancestral equine forms is continued into the Eocene formations. An older Miocene form, termed *Meshippus*, has three toes in front, with a large splint-like rudiment representing the little finger; and three toes behind. The radius and ulna, the tibia and the fibula, are distinct, and the short crowned molar teeth are anchitheroid in pattern.

But the most important discovery of all is the *Orohippus*, which comes from the Eocene formation, and is the oldest member of the equine series as yet known. Here we find four complete toes on the front limb, three toes on the hind-limb, a well-developed ulna, a well-developed fibula, and short-crowned grinders of simple pattern.

Thus, thanks to these important researches, it has become evident that, so far as our present knowledge extends, the history of the horse-type is exactly and precisely that which could have been predicted from a knowledge of the principles of evolution. And the knowledge we now possess justifies us completely in the anticipation, that when the still lower Eocene deposits, and those which belong to the cretaceous epoch, have yielded up their remains of ancestral equine animals, we shall find, first, a form with four complete toes and a rudiment of the innermost or first digit in front, with probably a rudiment of the fifth digit in the hind foot;¹ while, in still older forms, the series of the digits will be more and more complete, until we come

to the five-toed animals, in which, if the doctrine of evolution is well founded, the whole series must have taken its origin.

That is what I mean by demonstrative evidence of evolution. An inductive hypothesis is said to be demonstrated when the facts are shown to be in entire accordance with it. If that is not scientific proof, there are no merely inductive conclusions which can be said to be proved. And the doctrine of evolution, at the present time, rests upon exactly as secure a foundation as the Copernican theory of the motions of the heavenly bodies did at the time of its promulgation. Its logical basis is precisely of the same character—the coincidence of the observed facts with theoretical requirements.

The only way of escape, if it be a way of escape, from the conclusions which I have just indicated, is the supposition that all these different equine forms have been created separately at separate epochs of time; and, I repeat, that of such an hypothesis as this there neither is, nor can be, any scientific evidence; and, assuredly so far as I know, there is none which is supported, or pretends to be supported, by evidence or authority of any other kind. I can but think that the time will come when such suggestions as these, such obvious attempts to escape the force of demonstration, will be put upon the same footing as the supposition made by some writers, who are I believe not completely extinct at present, that fossils are mere simulacra, are no indications of the former existence of the animals to which they seem to belong; but that they are either sports of Nature, or special creations, intended—as I heard suggested the other day—to test our faith.

In fact, the whole evidence is in favour of evolution, and there is none against it. And I say this, although perfectly well aware of the seeming difficulties which have been built up upon what appears to the uninformed to be a solid foundation. I meet constantly

¹ Since this lecture was delivered, Professor Marsh has discovered a new genus of equine mammals (*Eohippus*) from the lowest Eocene deposits of the West, which corresponds very nearly to this description.—*American Journal of Science*, November, 1876.

with the argument that the doctrine of evolution cannot be well founded, because it requires the lapse of a very vast period of time ; while the duration of life upon the earth thus implied is inconsistent with the conclusions arrived at by the astronomer and the physicist. I may venture to say that I am familiar with those conclusions, inasmuch as some years ago, when President of the Geological Society of London, I took the liberty of criticising them, and of showing in what respects, as it appeared to me, they lacked complete and thorough demonstration. But, putting that point aside, suppose that, as the astronomers, or some of them, and some physical philosophers, tell us, it is impossible that life could have endured upon the earth for as long a period as is required by the doctrine of evolution—supposing that to be proved—I desire to be informed, what is the foundation for the statement that evolution does require so great a time? The biologist knows nothing whatever of the amount of time which may be required for the process of evolution. It is a matter of fact that the equine forms which I have described to you occur, in the order stated, in the Tertiary formations. But I have not the slightest means of guessing whether it took a million of years, or ten millions, or a hundred millions, or a thousand millions of years, to give rise to that series of changes. A biologist has no means of arriving at any conclusion as to the amount of time which may be needed for a certain quantity of organic change. He takes his time from the geologist. The geologist, considering the rate at which deposits are formed and the rate at which denudation goes on upon the surface of the earth, arrives at more or less justifiable conclusions as to the time which is required for the deposit of a certain thickness of rocks ; and if he tells me that the Tertiary formations required 500,000,000 years for their deposit, I suppose he has good ground for what he says, and I take that as a measure of the duration of the evolution of the horse

from the *Orohippus* up to its present condition. And, if he is right, undoubtedly evolution is a very slow process and requires a great deal of time. But suppose, now, that an astronomer or a physicist—for instance, my friend Sir William Thomson—tells me that my geological authority is quite wrong ; and that he has weighty evidence to show that life could not possibly have existed upon the surface of the earth 500,000,000 years ago, because the earth would have then been too hot to allow of life, my reply is : “That is not my affair ; settle that with the geologist, and when you have come to an agreement among yourselves I will adopt your conclusion.” We take our time from the geologists and physicists ; and it is monstrous that having taken our time from the physical philosopher’s clock, the physical philosopher should turn round upon us, and say we are too fast or too slow. What we desire to know is, is it a fact that evolution took place? As to the amount of time which evolution may have occupied, we are in the hands of the physicist and the astronomer, whose business it is to deal with those questions.

I have now, ladies and gentlemen, arrived at the conclusion of the task which I set before myself when I undertook to deliver these lectures. My purpose has been, not to enable those among you who have paid no attention to these subjects before, to leave this room in a condition to decide upon the validity or the invalidity of the hypothesis of evolution ; but I have desired to put before you the principles upon which all hypotheses respecting the history of Nature must be judged ; and furthermore, to make apparent the nature of the evidence and the amount of cogency which is to be expected and may be obtained from it. To this end, I have not hesitated to regard you as genuine students and persons desirous of knowing the truth. I have not shrunk from taking you through long discussions, that I fear may have sometimes

tried your patience ; and I have inflicted upon you details which were indispensable, but which may well have been wearisome. But I shall rejoice—I shall consider that I have done you the greatest service which it was in my power to do—if I have thus convinced

you that the great question which we have been discussing is not one to be dealt with by rhetorical flourishes, or by loose and superficial talk ; but that it requires the keen attention of the trained intellect and the patience of the accurate observer.

ON THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF LIFE

[1868]

IN order to make the title of this discourse generally intelligible, I have translated the term "Protoplasm," which is the scientific name of the substance of which I am about to speak, by the words "the physical basis of life." I suppose that, to many, the idea that there is such a thing as a physical basis, or matter, of life may be novel—so widely spread is the conception of life as a something which works through matter, but is independent of it ; and even those who are aware that matter and life are inseparably connected, may not be prepared for the conclusion plainly suggested by the phrase, "*the* physical basis or matter of life," that there is some one kind of matter which is common to all living beings, and that their endless diversities are bound together by a physical, as well as an ideal, unity. In fact, when first apprehended, such a doctrine as this appears almost shocking to common sense.

What, truly, can seem to be more obviously different from one another, in faculty, in form, and in substance, than the various kinds of living beings? What community of faculty can there be between the brightly-coloured lichen, which so nearly resembles a mere mineral incrustation of the bare rock on which it grows, and the painter, to whom it is instinct with beauty, or the botanist, whom it feeds with knowledge?

Again, think of the microscopic fungus—a mere infinitesimal ovoid particle,

which finds space and duration enough to multiply into countless millions in the body of a living fly ; and then of the wealth of foliage, the luxuriance of flower and fruit, which lies between this bald sketch of a plant and the giant pine of California, towering to the dimensions of a cathedral spire, or the Indian fig, which covers acres with its profound shadow, and endures while nations and empires come and go around its vast circumference. Or, turning to the other half of the world of life, picture to yourselves the great Finner whale, hugest of beasts that live, or have lived, disporting his eighty or ninety feet of bone, muscle, and blubber, with easy roll, among waves in which the stoutest ship that ever left dockyard would flounder hopelessly ; and contrast him with the invisible animalcules—mere gelatinous specks, multitudes of which could, in fact, dance upon the point of a needle with the same ease as the angels of the Schoolmen could, in imagination. With these images before your minds, you may well ask, what community of form, or structure, is there between the animalcule and the whale ; or between the fungus and the fig-tree ? And, *a fortiori*, between all four ?

Finally, if we regard substance, or material composition, what hidden bond can connect the flower which a girl wears in her hair and the blood which courses through her youthful veins ; or, what is there in common between the

dense and resisting mass of the oak, or the strong fabric of the tortoise, and those broad disks of glassy jelly which may be seen pulsating through the waters of a calm sea, but which drain away to mere films in the hand which raises them out of their element?

Such objections as these must, I think, arise in the mind of every one who ponders, for the first time, upon the conception of a single physical basis of life underlying all the diversities of vital existence; but I propose to demonstrate to you that, notwithstanding these apparent difficulties, a threefold unity—namely, a unity of power or faculty, a unity of form, and a unity of substantial composition—does pervade the whole living world.

No very abstruse argumentation is needed, in the first place, to prove that the powers, or faculties, of all kinds of living matter, diverse as they may be in degree, are substantially similar in kind.

Goethe has condensed a survey of all powers of mankind into the well-known epigram:—

“Warum treibt sich das Volk so und schreit?
Es will sich ernähren

Kinder zeugen, und die nähren so gut es
vermag.

* * * *

Weiter bringt es kein Mensch, stell’ er
sich wie er auch will.”

In physiological language this means, that all the multifarious and complicated activities of man are comprehensible under three categories. Either they are immediately directed towards the maintenance and development of the body, or they effect transitory changes in the relative positions of parts of the body, or they tend towards the continuance of the species. Even those manifestations of intellect, of feeling, and of will, which we rightly name the higher faculties, are not excluded from this classification, inasmuch as to every one but the subject of them, they are known only as transitory changes in the relative positions of parts of the body. Speech, gesture, and

every other form of human action are, in the long run, resolvable into muscular contraction, and muscular contraction is but a transitory change in the relative positions of the parts of a muscle. But the scheme which is large enough to embrace the activities of the highest form of life, covers all those of the lower creatures. The lowest plant, or animalcule, feeds, grows, and reproduces its kind. In addition, all animals manifest those transitory changes of form which we class under irritability and contractility; and, it is more than probable, that when the vegetable world is thoroughly explored, we shall find all plants in possession of the same powers, at one time or other of their existence.

I am not now alluding to such phænomena, at once rare and conspicuous, as those exhibited by the leaflets of the sensitive plants, or the stamens of the barberry, but to much more widely spread, and at the same time, more subtle and hidden, manifestations of vegetable contractility. You are doubtless aware that the common nettle owes its stinging property to the innumerable stiff and needle-like, though exquisitely delicate, hairs which cover its surface. Each stinging-needle tapers from a broad base to a slender summit, which, though rounded at the end, is of such microscopic fineness that it readily penetrates, and breaks off in, the skin. The whole hair consists of a very delicate outer case of wood, closely applied to the inner surface of which is a layer of semi-fluid matter, full of innumerable granules of extreme minuteness. This semi-fluid lining is protoplasm, which thus constitutes a kind of bag, full of a limpid liquid, and roughly corresponding in form with the interior of the hair which it fills. When viewed with a sufficiently high magnifying power, the protoplasmic layer of the nettle hair is seen to be in a condition of unceasing activity. Local contractions of the whole thickness of its substance pass slowly and gradually from point to point, and give rise to the appearance of pro-

gressive waves, just as the bending of successive stalks of corn by a breeze produces the apparent billows of a corn-field.

But, in addition to these movements, and independently of them, the granules are driven, in relatively rapid streams, through channels in the protoplasm which seem to have a considerable amount of persistence. Most commonly, the currents in adjacent parts of the protoplasm take similar directions; and, thus, there is a general stream up one side of the hair and down the other. But this does not prevent the existence of partial currents which take different routes; and sometimes trains of granules may be seen coursing swiftly in opposite directions within a twenty-thousandth of an inch of one another; while, occasionally, opposite streams come into direct collision, and, after a longer or shorter struggle, one predominates. The cause of these currents seems to lie in contractions of the protoplasm which bounds the channels in which they flow, but which are so minute that the best microscopes show only their effects, and not themselves.

The spectacle afforded by the wonderful energies prisoned within the compass of the microscopic hair of a plant, which we commonly regard as a merely passive organism, is not easily forgotten by one who has watched its display, continued hour after hour, without pause or sign of weakening. The possible complexity of many other organic forms, seemingly as simple as the protoplasm of the nettle, dawns upon one; and the comparison of such a protoplasm to a body with an internal circulation, which has been put forward by an eminent physiologist, loses much of its startling character. Currents similar to those of the hairs of the nettle have been observed in a great multitude of very different plants, and weighty authorities have suggested that they probably occur, in more or less perfection, in all young vegetable cells. If such be the case, the wonderful noonday silence of a tropical forest is, after all,

due only to the dulness of our hearing; and could our ears catch the murmur of these tiny Maelstroms, as they whirl in the innumerable myriads of living cells which constitute each tree, we should be stunned, as with the roar of a great city.

Among the lower plants, it is the rule rather than the exception, that contractility should be still more openly manifested at some periods of their existence. The protoplasm of *Algæ* and *Fungi* becomes, under many circumstances, partially, or completely, freed from its woody case, and exhibits movements of its whole mass, or is propelled by the contractility of one, or more, hair-like prolongations of its body, which are called vibratile cilia. And, so far as the conditions of the manifestation of the phenomena of contractility have yet been studied, they are the same for the plant as for the animal. Heat and electric shocks influence both, and in the same way, though it may be in different degrees. It is by no means my intention to suggest that there is no difference in faculty between the lowest plant and the highest, or between plants and animals. But the difference between the powers of the lowest plant, or animal, and those of the highest, is one of degree, not of kind, and depends, as Milne-Edwards long ago so well pointed out, upon the extent to which the principle of the division of labour is carried out in the living economy. In the lowest organism all parts are competent to perform all functions, and one and the same portion of protoplasm may successfully take on the function of feeding, moving, or reproducing apparatus. In the highest, on the contrary, a great number of parts combine to perform each function, each part doing its allotted share of the work with great accuracy and efficiency, but being useless for any other purpose.

On the other hand, notwithstanding all the fundamental resemblances which exist between the powers of the protoplasm in plants and in animals, they present a striking difference (to which I

shall advert more at length presently), in the fact that plants can manufacture fresh protoplasm out of mineral compounds, whereas animals are obliged to procure it ready made, and hence, in the long run, depend upon plants. Upon what condition this difference in the powers of the two great divisions of the world of life depends, nothing is at present known.

With such qualification as arises out of the last-mentioned fact, it may be truly said that the acts of all living things are fundamentally one. Is any such unity predicable of their forms? Let us seek in easily verified facts for a reply to this question. If a drop of blood be drawn by pricking one's finger, and viewed with proper precautions, and under a sufficiently high microscopic power, there will be seen, among the innumerable multitude of little, circular, discoidal bodies, or corpuscles, which float in it and give it its colour, a comparatively small number of colourless corpuscles, of somewhat larger size and very irregular shape. If the drop of blood be kept at the temperature of the body, these colourless corpuscles will be seen to exhibit a marvellous activity, changing their forms with great rapidity, drawing in and thrusting out prolongations of their substance, and creeping about as if they were independent organisms.

The substance which is thus active is a mass of protoplasm, and its activity differs in detail, rather than in principle, from that of the protoplasm of the nettle. Under sundry circumstances the corpuscle dies and becomes distended into a round mass, in the midst of which is seen a smaller spherical body, which existed, but was more or less hidden, in the living corpuscle, and is called its *nucleus*. Corpuscles of essentially similar structure are to be found in the skin, in the lining of the mouth, and scattered through the whole framework of the body. Nay, more; in the earliest condition of the human organism, in that state in which it has but just become distinguishable from the egg in which it

arises, it is nothing but an aggregation of such corpuscles, and every organ of the body was, once, no more than such an aggregation.

Thus a nucleated mass of protoplasm turns out to be what may be termed the structural unit of the human body. As a matter of fact, the body, in its earliest state, is a mere multiple of such units; and in its perfect condition, it is a multiple of such units, variously modified.

But does the formula which expresses the essential structural character of the highest animal cover all the rest, as the statement of its powers and faculties covered that of all others? Very nearly. Beast and fowl, reptile and fish, mollusk, worm, and polype, are all composed of structural units of the same character, namely, masses of protoplasm with a nucleus. There are sundry very low animals, each of which, structurally, is a mere colourless blood-corpuscle, leading an independent life. But at the very bottom of the animal scale, even this simplicity becomes simplified, and all the phænomena of life are manifested by a particle of protoplasm without a nucleus. Nor are such organisms insignificant by reason of their want of complexity. It is a fair question whether the protoplasm of those simplest forms of life, which people an immense extent of the bottom of the sea, would not outweigh that of all the higher living beings which inhabit the land put together. And in ancient times, no less than at the present day, such living beings as these have been the greatest of rock builders.

What has been said of the animal world is no less true of plants. Embedded in the protoplasm at the broad, or attached, end of the nettle hair, there lies a spheroidal nucleus. Careful examination further proves that the whole substance of the nettle is made up of a repetition of such masses of nucleated protoplasm, each contained in a wooden case, which is modified in form, sometimes into a woody fibre, sometimes into a duct or spiral vessel, sometimes into a

pollen grain, or an ovule. Traced back to its earliest state, the nettle arises as the man does, in a particle of nucleated protoplasm. And in the lowest plants, as in the lowest animals, a single mass of such protoplasm may constitute the whole plant, or the protoplasm may exist without a nucleus.

Under these circumstances it may well be asked, how is one mass of non-nucleated protoplasm to be distinguished from another? why call one "plant" and the other "animal"?

The only reply is that, so far as form is concerned, plants and animals are not separable, and that, in many cases, it is a mere matter of convention whether we call a given organism an animal or a plant. There is a living body called *Æthaliium septicum*, which appears upon decaying vegetable substances, and, in one of its forms, is common upon the surfaces of tan-pits. In this condition it is, to all intents and purposes, a fungus, and formerly was always regarded as such; but the remarkable investigations of De Bary have shown that, in another condition, the *Æthaliium* is an actively locomotive creature, and takes in solid matters, upon which, apparently, it feeds, thus exhibiting the most characteristic feature of animality. Is this a plant; or is it an animal? Is it both; or is it neither? Some decide in favour of the last supposition, and establish an intermediate kingdom, a sort of biological No Man's Land for all these questionable forms. But, as it is admittedly impossible to draw any distinct boundary line between this no man's land and the vegetable world, on the one hand, or the animal, on the other, it appears to me that this proceeding merely doubles the difficulty which, before, was single.

Protoplasm, simple or nucleated, is the formal basis of all life. It is the clay of the potter: which, bake it and paint it as he will, remains clay, separated by artifice, and not by nature, from the commonest brick or sun-dried clod.

Thus it becomes clear that all living powers are cognate, and that all living

forms are fundamentally of one character. The researches of the chemist have revealed a no less striking uniformity of material composition in living matter.

In perfect strictness, it is true that chemical investigation can tell us little or nothing, directly, of the composition of living matter, inasmuch as such matter must needs die in the act of analysis,—and upon this very obvious ground, objections, which I confess seem to me to be somewhat frivolous, have been raised to the drawing of any conclusions whatever respecting the composition of actually living matter, from that of the dead matter of life, which alone is accessible to us. But objectors of this class do not seem to reflect that it is also, in strictness, true that we know nothing about the composition of any body whatever, as it is. The statement that a crystal of calc-spar consists of carbonate of lime, is quite true, if we only mean that, by appropriate processes, it may be resolved into carbonic acid and quicklime. If you pass the same carbonic acid over the very quicklime thus obtained, you will obtain carbonate of lime again; but it will not be calc-spar, nor anything like it. Can it, therefore, be said that chemical analysis teaches nothing about the chemical composition of calc-spar? Such a statement would be absurd; but it is hardly more so than the talk one occasionally hears about the uselessness of applying the results of chemical analysis to the living bodies which have yielded them.

One fact, at any rate, is out of reach of such refinements, and this is, that all the forms of protoplasm which have yet been examined contain the four elements, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, in very complex union, and that they behave similarly towards several reagents. To this complex combination, the nature of which has never been determined with exactness, the name of Protein has been applied. And if we use this term with such caution as may properly arise out of our comparative ignorance of the things for which it

stands, it may be truly said, that all protoplasm is proteinaceous, or, as the white, or albumen, of an egg is one of the commonest examples of a nearly pure proteine matter, we may say that all living matter is more or less albuminoid.

Perhaps it would not yet be safe to say that all forms of protoplasm are affected by the direct action of electric shocks; and yet the number of cases in which the contraction of protoplasm is shown to be affected by this agency increases every day.

Nor can it be affirmed with perfect confidence, that all forms of protoplasm are liable to undergo that peculiar coagulation at a temperature of 40° — 50° centigrade, which has been called "heat-stiffening," though Kühne's beautiful researches have proved this occurrence to take place in so many and such diverse living beings, that it is hardly rash to expect that the law holds good for all.

Enough has, perhaps, been said to prove the existence of a general uniformity in the character of the protoplasm, or physical basis, of life, in whatever group of living beings it may be studied. But it will be understood that this general uniformity by no means excludes any amount of special modifications of the fundamental substance. The mineral, carbonate of lime, assumes an immense diversity of characters, though no one doubts that, under all these Protean changes, it is one and the same thing.

And now, what is the ultimate fate, and what the origin, of the matter of life?

Is it, as some of the older naturalists supposed, diffused throughout the universe in molecules, which are indestructible and unchangeable in themselves; but, in endless transmigration, unite in innumerable permutations, into the diversified forms of life we know? Or, is the matter of life composed of ordinary matter, differing from it only in the manner in which its atoms are aggregated? Is it built up of ordinary

matter, and again resolved into ordinary matter when its work is done?

Modern science does not hesitate a moment between these alternatives. Physiology writes over the portals of life—

"*Debemur morti nos nostraque,*"

with a profounder meaning than the Roman poet attached to that melancholy line. Under whatever disguise it takes refuge, whether fungus or oak, worm or man, the living protoplasm not only ultimately dies and is resolved into its mineral and lifeless constituents, but is always dying, and, strange as the paradox may sound, could not live unless it died.

In the wonderful story of the "*Peau de Chagrin*," the hero becomes possessed of a magical wild ass' skin, which yields him the means of gratifying all his wishes. But its surface represents the duration of the proprietor's life; and for every satisfied desire the skin shrinks in proportion to the intensity of fruition, until at length life and the last handbreadth of the *peau de chagrin*, disappear with the gratification of a last wish.

Balzac's studies had led him over a wide range of thought and speculation, and his shadowing forth of physiological truth in this strange story may have been intentional. At any rate, the matter of life is a veritable *peau de chagrin*, and for every vital act it is somewhat the smaller. All work implies waste, and the work of life results, directly or indirectly, in the waste of protoplasm.

Every word uttered by a speaker costs him some physical loss; and, in the strictest sense, he burns that others may have light—so much eloquence, so much of his body resolved into carbonic acid, water, and urea. It is clear that this process of expenditure cannot go on for ever. But, happily, the protoplasmic *peau de chagrin* differs from Balzac's in its capacity of being repaired, and brought back to its full size, after every exertion.

For example, this present lecture, whatever its intellectual worth to you, has a certain physical value to me, which is, conceivably, expressible by the number of grains of protoplasm and other bodily substance wasted in maintaining my vital processes during its delivery. My *peau de chagrin* will be distinctly smaller at the end of the discourse than it was at the beginning. By and by, I shall probably have recourse to the substance commonly called mutton, for the purpose of stretching it back to its original size. Now this mutton was once the living protoplasm, more or less modified, of another animal—a sheep. As I shall eat it, it is the same matter altered, not only by death, but by exposure to sundry artificial operations in the process of cooking.

But these changes, whatever be their extent, have not rendered it incompetent to resume its old functions as matter of life. A singular inward laboratory, which I possess, will dissolve a certain portion of the modified protoplasm; the solution so formed will pass into my veins; and the subtle influences to which it will then be subjected will convert the dead protoplasm into living protoplasm, and transubstantiate sheep into man.

Nor is this all. If digestion were a thing to be trifled with, I might sup upon lobster, and the matter of life of the crustacean would undergo the same wonderful metamorphosis into humanity. And were I to return to my own place by sea, and undergo shipwreck, the crustacean might, and probably would, return the compliment, and demonstrate our common nature by turning my protoplasm into living lobster. Or, if nothing better were to be had, I might supply my wants with mere bread, and I should find the protoplasm of the wheat-plant to be convertible into man, with no more trouble than that of the sheep, and with far less, I fancy, than that of the lobster.

Hence it appears to be a matter of no great moment what animal, or what plant, I lay under contribution for

protoplasm, and the fact speaks volumes for the general identity of that substance in all living beings. I share this catholicity of assimilation with other animals, all of which, so far as we know, could thrive equally well on the protoplasm of any of their fellows, or of any plant; but here the assimilative powers of the animal-world cease. A solution of smelling-salts in water, with an infinitesimal proportion of some other saline matters, contains all the elementary bodies which enter into the composition of protoplasm; but, as I need hardly say, a hogshead of that fluid would not keep a hungry man from starving, nor would it save any animal whatever from a like fate. An animal cannot make protoplasm, but must take it ready-made from some other animal, or some plant—the animal's highest feat of constructive chemistry being to convert dead protoplasm into that living matter of life which is appropriate to itself.

Therefore, in seeking for the origin of protoplasm, we must eventually turn to the vegetable world. A fluid containing carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts, which offers such a Barmecide feast to the animal, is a table richly spread to multitudes of plants; and, with a due supply of only such materials, many a plant will not only maintain itself in vigour, but grow and multiply until it has increased a million-fold, or a million million-fold, the quantity of protoplasm which it originally possessed; in this way building up the matter of life, to an indefinite extent, from the common matter of the universe.

Thus, the animal can only raise the complex substance of dead protoplasm to the higher power, as one may say, of living protoplasm; while the plant can raise the less complex substances—carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts—to the same stage of living protoplasm, if not to the same level. But the plant also has its limitations. Some of the fungi, for example, appear to need higher compounds to start with; and no known plant can live

upon the uncompound elements of protoplasm. A plant supplied with pure carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, and the like, would as infallibly die as the animal in his bath of smelling-salts, though it would be surrounded by all the constituents of protoplasm. Nor, indeed, need the process of simplification of vegetable food be carried so far as this, in order to arrive at the limit of the plant's thaumaturgy. Let water, carbonic acid, and all the other needful constituents be supplied except nitrogenous salts, and an ordinary plant will still be unable to manufacture protoplasm.

Thus the matter of life, so far as we know it (and we have no right to speculate on any other), breaks up, in consequence of that continual death which is the condition of its manifesting vitality, into carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous compounds, which certainly possess no properties but those of ordinary matter. And out of these same forms of ordinary matter, and from none which are simpler, the vegetable world builds up all the protoplasm which keeps the animal world a-going. Plants are the accumulators of the power which animals distribute and disperse.

But it will be observed, that the existence of the matter of life depends on the pre-existence of certain compounds; namely, carbonic acid, water, and certain nitrogenous bodies. Withdraw any one of these three from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. They are as necessary to the protoplasm of the plant as the protoplasm of the plant is to that of the animal. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and other elements give rise to nitrogenous salts. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together, under certain con-

ditions, they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life.

I see no break in this series of steps in molecular complication, and I am unable to understand why the language which is applicable to any one term of the series may not be used to any of the others. We think fit to call different kinds of matter carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen, and to speak of the various powers and activities of these substances as the properties of the matter of which they are composed.

When hydrogen and oxygen are mixed in a certain proportion, and an electric spark is passed through them, they disappear, and a quantity of water, equal in weight to the sum of their weights, appears in their place. There is not the slightest parity between the passive and active powers of the water and those of the oxygen and hydrogen which have given rise to it. At 32° Fahrenheit, and far below that temperature, oxygen and hydrogen are elastic gaseous bodies, whose particles tend to rush away from one another with great force. Water, at the same temperature, is a strong though brittle solid, whose particles tend to cohere into definite geometrical shapes, and sometimes build up frosty imitations of the most complex forms of vegetable foliage.

Nevertheless we call these, and many other strange phenomena, the properties of the water, and we do not hesitate to believe that, in some way or another, they result from the properties of the component elements of the water. We do not assume that a something called "aquosity" entered into and took possession of the oxidated hydrogen as soon as it was formed, and then guided the aqueous particles to their places in the facets of the crystal, or amongst the leaflets of the hoar-frost. On the contrary, we live in the hope and in the faith that, by the advance of molecular physics, we shall by and by be able to see our way as clearly from the constituents of water to the properties of water, as we are now able to deduce the operations of

a watch from the form of its parts and the manner in which they are put together.

Is the case in any way changed when carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts disappear, and in their place, under the influence of pre-existing living protoplasm, an equivalent weight of the matter of life makes its appearance?

It is true that there is no sort of parity between the properties of the components and the properties of the resultant, but neither was there in the case of the water. It is also true that what I have spoken of as the influence of pre-existing living matter is something quite unintelligible; but does anybody quite comprehend the *modus operandi* of an electric spark, which traverses a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen?

What justification is there, then, for the assumption of the existence in the living matter of a something which has no representative, or correlative, in the not living matter which gave rise to it? What better philosophical status has "vitality" than "aquosity"? And why should "vitality" hope for a better fate than the other "itys" which have disappeared since Martinus Scriblerus accounted for the operation of the meat-jack by its inherent "meat-roasting quality," and scorned the "materialism" of those who explained the turning of the spit by a certain mechanism worked by the draught of the chimney.

If scientific language is to possess a definite and constant signification whenever it is employed, it seems to me that we are logically bound to apply to the protoplasm, or physical basis of life, the same conceptions as those which are held to be legitimate elsewhere. If the phenomena exhibited by water are its properties, so are those presented by protoplasm, living or dead, its properties.

If the properties of water may be properly said to result from the nature and disposition of its component molecules, I can find no intelligible ground for refusing to say that the properties of

protoplasm result from the nature and disposition of its molecules.

But I bid you beware that, in accepting these conclusions, you are placing your feet on the first rung of a ladder which, in most people's estimation, is the reverse of Jacob's, and leads to the antipodes of heaven. It may seem a small thing to admit that the dull vital actions of a fungus, or a foraminifer, are the properties of their protoplasm, and are the direct results of the nature of the matter of which they are composed. But if, as I have endeavoured to prove to you, their protoplasm is essentially identical with, and most readily converted into, that of any animal, I can discover no logical halting-place between the admission that such is the case, and the further concession that all vital action may, with equal propriety, be said to be the result of the molecular forces of the protoplasm which displays it. And if so, it must be true, in the same sense and to the same extent, that the thoughts to which I am now giving utterance, and your thoughts regarding them, are the expression of molecular changes in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena.

Past experience leads me to be tolerably certain that, when the propositions I have just placed before you are accessible to public comment and criticism, they will be condemned by many zealous persons, and perhaps by some few of the wise and thoughtful. I should not wonder if "gross and brutal materialism" were the mildest phrase applied to them in certain quarters. And, most undoubtedly, the terms of the propositions are distinctly materialistic. Nevertheless two things are certain; the one, that I hold the statements to be substantially true; the other, that I, individually, am no materialist, but, on the contrary, believe materialism to involve grave philosophical error.

This union of materialistic terminology with the repudiation of materialistic

philosophy I share with some of the most thoughtful men with whom I am acquainted. And, when I first undertook to deliver the present discourse, it appeared to me to be a fitting opportunity to explain how such a union is not only consistent with, but necessitated by, sound logic. I purposed to lead you through the territory of vital phænomena to the materialistic slough in which you find yourselves now plunged, and then to point out to you the sole path by which, in my judgment, extrication is possible.

An occurrence of which I was unaware until my arrival here last night renders this line of argument singularly opportune. I found in your papers the eloquent address "On the Limits of Philosophical Inquiry," which a distinguished prelate of the English Church delivered before the members of the Philosophical Institution on the previous day. My argument, also, turns upon this very point of the limits of philosophical inquiry; and I cannot bring out my own views better than by contrasting them with those so plainly and, in the main, fairly stated by the Archbishop of York.

But I may be permitted to make a preliminary comment upon an occurrence that greatly astonished me. Applying the name of the "New Philosophy" to that estimate of the limits of philosophical inquiry which I, in common with many other men of science, hold to be just, the Archbishop opens his address by identifying this "New Philosophy" with the Positive Philosophy of M. Comte (of whom he speaks as its "founder"); and then proceeds to attack that philosopher and his doctrines vigorously.

Now, so far as I am concerned, the most reverend prelate might dialectically hew M. Comte in pieces, as a modern Agag, and I should not attempt to stay his hand. In so far as my study of what specially characterises the Positive Philosophy has led me, I find therein little or nothing of any scientific value,

and a great deal which is as thoroughly antagonistic to the very essence of science as anything in ultramontane Catholicism. In fact, M. Comte's philosophy, in practice, might be compendiously described as Catholicism *minus* Christianity.

But what has Comtism to do with the "New Philosophy," as the Archbishop defines it in the following passage?

"Let me briefly remind you of the leading principles of this new philosophy.

"All knowledge is experience of facts acquired by the senses. The traditions of older philosophies have obscured our experience by mixing with it much that the senses cannot observe, and until these additions are discarded our knowledge is impure. Thus metaphysics tell us that one fact which we observe is a cause, and another is the effect of that cause; but, upon a rigid analysis, we find that our senses observe nothing of cause or effect: they observe, first, that one fact succeeds another, and, after some opportunity, that this fact has never failed to follow—that for cause and effect we should substitute invariable succession. An older philosophy teaches us to define an object by distinguishing its essential from its accidental qualities: but experience knows nothing of essential and accidental; she sees only that certain marks attach to an object, and, after many observations, that some of them attach invariably, whilst others may at times be absent. . . . As all knowledge is relative, the notion of anything being necessary must be banished with other traditions."¹

There is much here that expresses the spirit of the "New Philosophy," if by that term be meant the spirit of modern science; but I cannot but marvel that the assembled wisdom and learning of Edinburgh should have uttered no sign of dissent, when Comte was declared to be the founder of these doctrines. No one will accuse Scotchmen of habitually forgetting their great countrymen; but it was enough to make David Hume turn in his grave, that here, almost within ear-shot of his house, an instructed audience should have listened, without a murmur, while his most characteristic doctrines were attributed to a French writer of fifty years later date, in whose dreary and verbose pages we miss

¹ *The Limits of Philosophical Inquiry*, pp. 4 and 5.

alike the vigour of thought and the exquisite clearness of style of the man whom I make bold to term the most acute thinker of the eighteenth century—even though that century produced Kant.

But I did not come to Scotland to vindicate the honour of one of the greatest men she has ever produced. My business is to point out to you that the only way of escape out of the “crass materialism” in which we just now landed, is the adoption and strict working-out of the very principles which the Archbishop holds up to reprobation.

Let us suppose that knowledge is absolute, and not relative, and therefore, that our conception of matter represents that which it really is. Let us suppose, further, that we do know more of cause and effect than a certain definite order of succession among facts, and that we have a knowledge of the necessity of that succession—and hence, of necessary laws—and I, for my part, do not see what escape there is from utter materialism and necessarianism. For it is obvious that our knowledge of what we call the material world is, to begin with, at least as certain and definite as that of the spiritual world, and that our acquaintance with law is of as old a date as our knowledge of spontaneity. Further, I take it to be demonstrable that it is utterly impossible to prove that anything whatever may not be the effect of a material and necessary cause, and that human logic is equally incompetent to prove that any act is really spontaneous. A really spontaneous act is one which, by the assumption, has no cause; and the attempt to prove such a negative as this is, on the face of the matter, absurd. And while it is thus a philosophical impossibility to demonstrate that any given phenomenon is not the effect of a material cause, any one who is acquainted with the history of science will admit, that its progress has, in all ages, meant, and now, more than ever, means, the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the

concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity.

I have endeavoured, in the first part of this discourse, to give you a conception of the direction towards which modern physiology is tending; and I ask you, what is the difference between the conception of life as the product of a certain disposition of material molecules, and the old notion of an Archæus governing and directing blind matter within each living body, except this—that here, as elsewhere, matter and law have devoured spirit and spontaneity? And as surely as every future grows out of past and present, so will the physiology of the future gradually extend the realm of matter and law until it is co-extensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action.

The consciousness of this great truth weighs like a nightmare, I believe, upon many of the best minds of these days. They watch what they conceive to be the progress of materialism, in such fear and powerless anger as a savage feels, when, during an eclipse, the great shadow creeps over the face of the sun. The advancing tide of matter threatens to drown their souls; the tightening grasp of law impedes their freedom; they are alarmed lest man’s moral nature be debased by the increase of his wisdom.

If the “New Philosophy” be worthy of the reprobation with which it is visited, I confess their fears seem to me to be well founded. While, on the contrary, could David Hume be consulted, I think he would smile at their perplexities, and chide them for doing even as the heathen, and falling down in terror before the hideous idols their own hands have raised.

For, after all, what do we know of this terrible “matter,” except as a name for the unknown and hypothetical cause of states of our own consciousness? And what do we know of that “spirit” over whose threatened extinction by matter a great lamentation is arising, like that which was heard at the death of Pan,

except that it is also a name for an unknown and hypothetical cause, or condition, of states of consciousness? In other words, matter and spirit are but names for the imaginary substrata of groups of natural phænomena.

And what is the dire necessity and "iron" law under which men groan? Truly, most gratuitously invented bugbears. I suppose if there be an "iron" law, it is that of gravitation; and if there be a physical necessity, it is that a stone, unsupported, must fall to the ground. But what is all we really know, and can know, about the latter phænomena? Simply, that, in all human experience, stones have fallen to the ground under these conditions; that we have not the smallest reason for believing that any stone so circumstanced will not fall to the ground; and that we have, on the contrary, every reason to believe that it will so fall. It is very convenient to indicate that all the conditions of belief have been fulfilled in this case, by calling the statement that unsupported stones will fall to the ground, "a law of Nature." But when, as commonly happens, we change *will* into *must*, we introduce an idea of necessity which most assuredly does not lie in the observed facts, and has no warranty that I can discover elsewhere. For my part, I utterly repudiate and anathematise the intruder. Fact I know; and Law I know; but what is this Necessity, save an empty shadow of my own mind's throwing?

But, if it is certain that we can have no knowledge of the nature of either matter or spirit, and that the notion of necessity is something illegitimately thrust into the perfectly legitimate conception of law, the materialistic position that there is nothing in the world but matter, force, and necessity, is as utterly devoid of justification as the most baseless of theological dogmas. The fundamental doctrines of materialism, like those of spiritualism, and most other "isms," lie outside "the limits of philosophical inquiry," and David Hume's

great service to humanity is his irrefragable demonstration of what these limits are. Hume called himself a sceptic, and therefore others cannot be blamed if they apply the same title to him; but that does not alter the fact that the name, with its existing implications, does him gross injustice.

If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I do not know; that neither I, nor any one else, has any means of knowing; and that, under these circumstances, I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all, I do not think he has any right to call me a sceptic. On the contrary, in replying thus, I conceive that I am simply honest and truthful, and show a proper regard for the economy of time. So Hume's strong and subtle intellect takes up a great many problems about which we are naturally curious, and shows us that they are essentially questions of lunar politics, in their essence incapable of being answered, and therefore not worth the attention of men who have work to do in the world. And he thus ends one of his essays:—

"If we take in hand any volume of Divinity, or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."¹

Permit me to enforce this most wise advice. Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and

¹ Hume's Essay, "Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy," in the *Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding*.—[Many critics of this passage seem to forget that the subject-matter of Ethics and Æsthetics consists of matters of fact and existence.—1892.]

somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of Nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition¹ counts for something as a condition of the course of events.

Each of these beliefs can be verified experimentally, as often as we like to try. Each, therefore, stands upon the strongest foundation upon which any belief can rest, and forms one of our highest truths. If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology, or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind, that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols.

In itself it is of little moment whether we express the phænomena of matter in terms of spirit; or the phænomena of spirit in terms of matter: matter may be regarded as a form of thought, thought may be regarded as a property of matter—each statement has a certain relative truth. But with a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology

¹ Or, to speak more accurately, the physical state of which volition is the expression.—[1892.]

is in every way to be preferred. For it connects thought with the other phænomena of the universe, and suggests inquiry into the nature of those physical conditions, or concomitants of thought, which are more or less accessible to us, and a knowledge of which may, in future, help us to exercise the same kind of control over the world of thought, as we already possess in respect of the material world; whereas, the alternative, or spiritualistic, terminology is utterly barren, and leads to nothing but obscurity and confusion of ideas.

Thus there can be little doubt, that the further science advances, the more extensively and consistently will all the phænomena of Nature be represented by materialistic formulæ and symbols.

But the man of science, who, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulæ and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician, who should mistake the *x*'s and *y*'s with which he works his problems, for real entities—and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.

NATURALISM AND SUPERNATURALISM

[FROM PROLOGUE TO CONTROVERTED QUESTIONS, 1892.]

THERE is a single problem with different aspects of which thinking men have been occupied, ever since they began seriously to consider the wonderful frame of things in which their lives are set, and to seek for trustworthy guidance among its intricacies.

Experience speedily taught them that the shifting scenes of the world's stage have a permanent background; that there is order amidst the seeming confusion, and that many events take place

according to unchanging rules. To this region of familiar steadiness and customary regularity they gave the name of Nature. But at the same time, their infantile and untutored reason, little more, as yet, than the playfellow of the imagination, led them to believe that this tangible, commonplace, orderly world of Nature was surrounded and interpenetrated by another intangible and mysterious world, no more bound by fixed rules than, as they fancied, were

the thoughts and passions which coursed through their minds and seemed to exercise an intermittent and capricious rule over their bodies. They attributed to the entities, with which they peopled this dim and dreadful region, an unlimited amount of that power of modifying the course of events of which they themselves possessed a small share, and thus came to regard them as not merely beyond, but above, Nature.

Hence arose the conception of a "Supernature" antithetic to "Nature"—the primitive dualism of a natural world "fixed in fate" and a supernatural, left to the free play of volition—which has pervaded all later speculation, and, for thousands of years, has exercised a profound influence on practice. For it is obvious that, on this theory of the Universe, the successful conduct of life must demand careful attention to both worlds; and, if either is to be neglected, it may be safer that it should be Nature. In any given contingency, it must doubtless be desirable to know what may be expected to happen in the ordinary course of things; but it must be quite as necessary to have some inkling of the line likely to be taken by supernatural agencies able, and possibly willing, to suspend or reverse that course. Indeed, logically developed, the dualistic theory must needs end in almost exclusive attention to Supernature, and in trust that its over-ruling strength will be exerted in favour of those who stand well with its denizens. On the other hand, the lessons of the great school-master, experience, have hardly seemed to accord with this conclusion. They have taught, with considerable emphasis, that it does not answer to neglect Nature; and that, on the whole, the more attention paid to her dictates the better men fare.

Thus the theoretical antithesis brought about a practical antagonism. From the earliest times of which we have any knowledge, Naturalism and Supernaturalism have consciously, or unconsciously, competed and struggled

with one another; and the varying fortunes of the contest are written in the records of the course of civilisation, from those of Egypt and Babylonia, six thousand years ago, down to those of our own time and people.

These records inform us that, so far as men have paid attention to Nature, they have been rewarded for their pains. They have developed the Arts which have furnished the conditions of civilised existence; and the Sciences, which have been a progressive revelation of reality, and have afforded the best discipline of the mind in the methods of discovering truth. They have accumulated a vast body of universally accepted knowledge; and the conceptions of man and of society, of morals and of law, based upon that knowledge, are every day more and more, either openly or tacitly, acknowledged to be the foundations of right action.

History also tells us that the field of the supernatural has rewarded its cultivators with a harvest, perhaps not less luxuriant, but of a different character. It has produced an almost infinite diversity of Religions. These, if we set aside the ethical concomitants upon which natural knowledge also has a claim, are composed of information about Supernature; they tell us of the attributes of supernatural beings, of their relations with Nature, and of the operations by which their interference with the ordinary course of events can be secured or averted. It does not appear, however, that supernaturalists have attained to any agreement about these matters or that history indicates a widening of the influence of supernaturalism on practice, with the onward flow of time. On the contrary, the various religions are, to a great extent, mutually exclusive; and their adherents delight in charging each other, not merely with error, but with criminality, deserving and ensuing punishment of infinite severity. In singular contrast with natural knowledge, again, the acquaintance of mankind with the super-

natural appears the more extensive and the more exact, and the influence of supernatural doctrines upon conduct the greater, the further back we go in time and the lower the stage of civilisation submitted to investigation. Historically, indeed, there would seem to be an inverse relation between supernatural and natural knowledge. As the latter has widened, gained in precision and in trustworthiness, so has the former shrunk, grown vague and questionable; as the one has more and more filled the sphere of action, so has the other retreated into the region of meditation, or vanished behind the screen of mere verbal recognition.

Whether this difference of the fortunes of Naturalism and of Supernaturalism is an indication of the progress, or of the regress, of humanity; of a fall from, or an advance towards, the higher life; is a matter of opinion. The point to which I wish to direct attention is that the difference exists and is making itself felt. Men are growing to be seriously alive to the fact that the historical evolution of humanity which is generally, and I venture to think not unreasonably, regarded as progress, has been, and is being, accompanied by a co-ordinate elimination of the supernatural from its originally large occupation of men's thoughts. The question—How far is this process to go?—is in my apprehension, the Controverted Question of our time.

Controversy on this matter—prolonged, bitter, and fought out with the weapons of the flesh, as well as with those of the spirit—is no new thing to Englishmen. We have been more or less occupied with it these five hundred years. And, during that time, we have made attempts to establish a *modus vivendi* between the antagonists, some of which have had a world-wide influence; though, unfortunately, none have proved universally and permanently satisfactory.

In the fourteenth century, the controverted question among us was, whether

certain portions of the Supernaturalism of mediæval Christianity were well-founded. John Wicliff proposed a solution of the problem which, in the course of the following two hundred years, acquired wide popularity and vast historical importance: Lollards, Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, Zwinglians, Socinians, and Anabaptists, whatever their disagreements, concurred in the proposal to reduce the Supernaturalism of Christianity within the limits sanctioned by the Scriptures. None of the chiefs of Protestantism called in question either the supernatural origin and infallible authority of the Bible, or the exactitude of the account of the supernatural world given in its pages. In fact, they could not afford to entertain any doubt about these points, since the infallible Bible was the fulcrum of the lever with which they were endeavouring to upset the Chair of St. Peter. The "freedom of private judgment" which they proclaimed, meant no more, in practice, than permission to themselves to make free with the public judgment of the Roman Church, in respect of the canon and of the meaning to be attached to the words of the canonical books. Private judgment—that is to say, reason—was (theoretically, at any rate) at liberty to decide what books were and what were not to take the rank of "Scripture"; and to determine the sense of any passage in such books. But this sense, once ascertained to the mind of the sectary, was to be taken for pure truth—for the very word of God. The controversial efficiency of the principle of biblical infallibility lay in the fact that the conservative adversaries of the Reformers were not in a position to contravene it without entangling themselves in serious difficulties; while, since both Papists and Protestants agreed in taking efficient measures to stop the mouths of any more radical critics, these did not count.

The impotence of their adversaries, however, did not remove the inherent weakness of the position of the Protest-

ants. The dogma of the infallibility of the Bible is no more self-evident than is that of the infallibility of the Pope. If the former is held by "faith," then the latter may be. If the latter is to be accepted, or rejected, by private judgment, why not the former? Even if the Bible could be proved anywhere to assert its own infallibility, the value of that self-assertion to those who dispute the point is not obvious. On the other hand, if the infallibility of the Bible was rested on that of a "primitive Church," the admission that the "Church" was formerly infallible was awkward in the extreme for those who denied its present infallibility. Moreover, no sooner was the Protestant principle applied to practice, than it became evident that even an infallible text, when manipulated by private judgment, will impartially countenance contradictory deductions; and furnish forth creeds and confessions as diverse as the quality and the information of the intellects which exercise, and the prejudices and passions which sway, such judgments. Every sect, confident in the derivative infallibility of its wire-drawing of infallible materials, was ready to supply its contingent of martyrs; and to enable history, once more, to illustrate the truth, that steadfastness under persecution says much for the sincerity and still more for the tenacity, of the believer, but very little for the objective truth of that which he believes. No martyrs have sealed their faith with their blood more steadfastly than the Anabaptists.

Last, but not least, the Protestant principle contained within itself the germs of the destruction of the finality, which the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and other Protestant Churches fondly imagined they had reached. Since their creeds were professedly based on the canonical Scriptures, it followed that, in the long run, whoso settled the canon defined the creed. If the private judgment of Luther might legitimately conclude that the epistle of

James was contemptible, while the epistles of Paul contained the very essence of Christianity, it must be permissible for some other private judgment, on as good or as bad grounds, to reverse these conclusions; the critical process which excluded the Apocrypha could not be barred, at any rate by people who rejected the authority of the Church, from extending its operations to Daniel, the Canticles, and Ecclesiastes; nor, having got so far, was it easy to allege any good ground for staying the further progress of criticism. In fact, the logical development of Protestantism could not fail to lay the authority of the Scriptures at the feet of Reason; and in the hands of latitudinarian and rationalistic theologians, the despotism of the Bible was rapidly converted into an extremely limited monarchy. Treated with as much respect as ever, the sphere of its practical authority was minimised; and its decrees were valid only so far as they were countersigned by common sense, the responsible minister.

The champions of Protestantism are much given to glorify the Reformation of the sixteenth century as the emancipation of Reason; but it may be doubted if their contention has any solid ground; while there is a good deal of evidence to show, that aspirations after intellectual freedom had nothing whatever to do with the movement. Dante, who struck the Papacy as hard blows as Wicliff; Wicliff himself and Luther himself, when they began their work; were far enough from any intention of meddling with even the most irrational of the dogmas of mediæval Supernaturalism. From Wicliff to Socinus, or even to Münzer, Rothmann, and John of Leyden, I fail to find a trace of any desire to set reason free. The most that can be discovered is a proposal to change masters. From being the slave of the Papacy the intellect was to become the serf of the Bible; or, to speak more accurately, of somebody's interpretation of the Bible, which, rapidly shifting its attitude from the humility of

a private judgment to the arrogant Cæsaro-papistry of a state-enforced creed had no more hesitation about forcibly extinguishing opponent private judgments and judges, than had the old-fashioned Pontiff-papistry.

It was the iniquities, and not the irrationalities, of the Papal system that lay at the bottom of the revolt of the laity; which was, essentially, an attempt to shake off the intolerable burden of certain practical deductions from a Supernaturalism in which everybody, in principle, acquiesced. What was the gain to intellectual freedom of abolishing transubstantiation, image worship, indulgences, ecclesiastical infallibility; if consubstantiation, real-unreal presence mystifications, the bibliolatry, the "inner-light" pretensions, and the demonology, which are fruits of the same supernaturalistic tree, remained in enjoyment of the spiritual and temporal support of a new infallibility? One does not free a prisoner by merely scraping away the rust from his shackles.

It will be asked, perhaps, was not the Reformation one of the products of that great outbreak of many-sided free mental activity included under the general head of the Renaissance? Melancthon, Ulrich von Hutten, Beza, were they not all humanists? Was not the arch-humanist, Erasmus, fautor-in-chief of the Reformation, until he got frightened and basely deserted it?

From the language of Protestant historians, it would seem that they often forget that Reformation and Protestantism are by no means convertible terms. There were plenty of sincere and indeed zealous reformers, before, during, and after the birth and growth of Protestantism, who would have nothing to do with it. Assuredly, the rejuvenescence of science and of art; the widening of the field of Nature by geographical and astronomical discovery: the revelation of the noble ideals of antique literature by the revival of classical learning; the stir of thought, throughout all classes of society, by the

printers' work, loosened traditional bonds and weakened the hold of mediæval Supernaturalism. In the interests of liberal culture and of national welfare, the humanists were eager to lend a hand to anything which tended to the discomfiture of their sworn enemies, the monks, and they willingly supported every movement in the direction of weakening ecclesiastical interference with civil life. But the bond of a common enemy was the only real tie between the humanist and the protestant; their alliance was bound to be of short duration, and, sooner or later, to be replaced by internecine warfare. The goal of the humanists, whether they were aware of it or not, was the attainment of the complete intellectual freedom of the antique philosopher, than which nothing could be more abhorrent to a Luther, a Calvin, a Beza, or a Zwingli.

The key to the comprehension of the conduct of Erasmus, seems to me to lie in the clear apprehension of this fact. That he was a man of many weaknesses may be true; in fact, he was quite aware of them and professed himself no hero. But he never deserted that reformatory movement which he originally contemplated: and it was impossible he should have deserted the specifically Protestant reformation in which he never took part. He was essentially a theological whig, to whom radicalism was as hateful as it is to all whigs; or to borrow a still more appropriate comparison from modern times, a broad churchman who refused to enlist with either the High Church or the Low Church zealots, and paid the penalty of being called coward, time-server and traitor, by both. Yet really there is a good deal in his pathetic remonstrance that he does not see why he is bound to become a martyr for that in which he does not believe; and a fair consideration of the circumstances and the consequences of the Protestant reformation seems to me to go a long way towards justifying the course he adopted.

Few men had better means of being acquainted with the condition of Europe;

none could be more competent to gauge the intellectual shallowness and self-contradiction of the Protestant criticism of Catholic doctrine; and to estimate, at its proper value, the fond imagination that the waters let out by the Renaissance would come to rest amidst the blind alleys of the new ecclesiasticism. The bastard, whilom poor student and monk, become the familiar of bishops and princes, at home in all grades of society, could not fail to be aware of the gravity of the social position, of the dangers imminent from the profligacy and indifference of the ruling classes, no less than from the anarchical tendencies of the people who groaned under their oppression. The wanderer who had lived in Germany, in France, in England, in Italy, and who counted many of the best and most influential men in each country among his friends, was not likely to estimate wrongly the enormous forces which were still at the command of the Papacy. Bad as the churchmen might be, the statesmen were worse; and a person of far more sanguine temperament than Erasmus might have seen no hope for the future, except in gradually freeing the ubiquitous organisation of the Church from the corruptions which alone, as he imagined, prevented it from being as beneficent as it was powerful. The broad tolerance of the scholar and man of the world might well be revolted by the ruffianism, however genial, of one great light of Protestantism, and the narrow fanaticism, however learned and logical, of others, and to a cautious thinker, by whom, whatever his short-comings, the ethical ideal of the Christian evangel was sincerely prized, it really was a fair question whether it was worth while to bring about a political and social deluge, the end of which no mortal could foresee, for the purpose of setting up Lutheran, Zwinglian, and other Peterkins, in the place of the actual claimant to the reversion of the spiritual wealth of the Galilean fisherman.

Let us suppose that, at the beginning

of the Lutheran and Zwinglian movement, a vision of its immediate consequences had been granted to Erasmus; imagine that to the spectre of the fierce outbreak of Anabaptist communism which opened the apocalypse had succeeded, in shadowy procession, the reign of terror and of spoliation in England, with the judicial murders of his friends, More and Fisher; the bitter tyranny of evangelistic clericalism in Geneva and in Scotland; the long agony of religious wars, persecutions, and massacres, which devastated France and reduced Germany almost to savagery; finishing with the spectacle of Lutheranism in its native country sunk into mere dead Erastian formalism, before it was a century old; while Jesuitry triumphed over Protestantism in three-fourths of Europe, bringing in its train a recrudescence of all the corruptions Erasmus and his friends sought to abolish; might not he have quite honestly thought this a somewhat too heavy price to pay for Protestantism; more especially, since no one was in a better position than himself to know how little the dogmatic foundation of the new confessions was able to bear the light which the inevitable progress of humanistic criticism would throw upon them? As the wiser of his contemporaries saw, Erasmus was, at heart, neither Protestant nor Papist, but an "Independent Christian"; and, as the wiser of his modern biographers have discerned, he was the precursor, not of sixteenth century reform, but of eighteenth century "enlightenment"; a sort of broad-church Voltaire, who held by his "Independent Christianity" as stoutly as Voltaire by his Deism.

In fact, the stream of the Renaissance, which bore Erasmus along, left Protestantism stranded amidst the mudbanks of its articles and creeds: while its true course became visible to all men, two centuries later. By this time, those in whom the movement of the Renaissance was incarnate became aware what spirit they were of; and they attacked Supernaturalism in its Biblical stronghold,

defended by Protestants and Romanists with equal zeal. In the eyes of the "Patriarch," Ultramontanism, Jansenism, and Calvinism were merely three persons of the one "Infâme" which it was the object of his life to crush. If he hated one more than another, it was probably the last; while D'Holbach, and the extreme left of the free-thinking host, were disposed to show no more mercy to Deism and Pantheism.

The sceptical insurrection of the eighteenth century made a terrific noise and frightened not a few worthy people out of their wits; but cool judges might have foreseen, at the outset, that the efforts of the later rebels were no more likely than those of the earlier, to furnish permanent resting-places for the spirit of scientific inquiry. However worthy of admiration may be the acuteness, the common sense, the wit, the broad humanity, which abound in the writings of the best of the free-thinkers; there is rarely much to be said for their work as an example of the adequate treatment of a grave and difficult investigation. I do not think any impartial judge will assert that, from this point of view, they are much better than their adversaries. It must be admitted that they share to the full the fatal weakness of *a priori* philosophising, no less than the moral frivolity common to their age; while a singular want of appreciation of history, as the record of the moral and social evolution of the human race, permitted them to resort to preposterous theories of imposture, in order to account for the religious phenomena which are natural products of that evolution.

For the most part, the Romanist and Protestant adversaries of the free-thinkers met them with arguments no better than their own; and with vituperation, so far inferior that it lacked the wit. But one great Christian Apologist fairly captured the guns of the free-thinking array, and turned their batteries upon themselves. Speculative "infidelity" of the eighteenth century type was mortally wounded by the *Analogy*; while the

progress of the historical and psychological sciences brought to light the important part played by the mythopœic faculty; and, by demonstrating the extreme readiness of men to impose upon themselves, rendered the calling in of sacerdotal co-operation, in most cases, a superfluity.

Again, as in the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, social and political influences came into play. The free-thinking *philosophes*, who objected to Rousseau's sentimental religiosity almost as much as they did to *L'Infâme*, were credited with the responsibility for all the evil deeds of Rousseau's Jacobin disciples, with about as much justification as Wicliff was held responsible for the Peasants' revolt, or Luther for the *Bauern-krieg*. In England, though our *ancien régime* was not altogether lovely, the social edifice was never in such a bad way as in France; it was still capable of being repaired; and our forefathers, very wisely, preferred to wait until that operation could be safely performed, rather than pull it all down about their ears, in order to build a philosophically planned house on brand-new speculative foundations. Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that, in this country, practical men preferred the Gospel of Wesley and Whitfield to that of Jean Jacques; while enough of the old leaven of Puritanism remained to ensure the favour and support of a large number of religious men to a revival of evangelical supernaturalism. Thus, by degrees, the free-thinking, or the indifference, prevalent among us in the first half of the eighteenth century, was replaced by a strong supernaturalistic reaction, which submerged the work of the free-thinkers; and even seemed, for a time, to have arrested the naturalistic movement of which that work was an imperfect indication. Yet, like Lollardry, four centuries earlier, free-thought merely took to running underground, safe, sooner or later, to return to the surface.

My memory, unfortunately, carries me

back to the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, when the evangelical flood had a little abated and the tops of certain mountains were soon to appear, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Oxford; but when, nevertheless, bibliolatry was rampant; when church and chapel alike proclaimed, as the oracles of God, the crude assumptions of the worst informed and, in natural sequence, the most presumptuously bigoted, of all theological schools.

In accordance with promises made on my behalf, but certainly without my authorisation, I was very early taken to hear "sermons in the vulgar tongue." And vulgar enough often was the tongue in which some preacher, ignorant alike of literature, of history, of science, and even of theology, outside that patronised by his own narrow school, poured forth, from the safe entrenchment of the pulpit, invectives against those who deviated from his notion of orthodoxy. From dark allusions to "sceptics" and "infidels," I became aware of the existence of people who trusted in carnal reason; who audaciously doubted that the world was made in six natural days, or that the deluge was universal; perhaps even went so far as to question the literal accuracy of the story of Eve's temptation, or of Balaam's ass; and, from the horror of the tones in which they were mentioned, I should have been justified in drawing the conclusion that these rash men belonged to the criminal classes. At the same time, those who were more directly responsible for providing me with the knowledge essential to the right guidance of life (and who sincerely desired to do so), imagined they were discharging that most sacred duty by impressing upon my childish mind the necessity, on pain of reprobation in this world and damnation in the next, of accepting, in the strict and literal sense, every statement contained in the Protestant Bible. I was told to believe, and I did believe, that doubt about any of them was a sin, not less reprehensible than a moral

delict. I suppose that, out of a thousand of my contemporaries, nine hundred, at least, had their minds systematically warped and poisoned, in the name of the God of truth, by like discipline. I am sure that, even a score of years later, those who ventured to question the exact historical accuracy of any part of the Old Testament and *a fortiori* of the Gospels, had to expect a pitiless shower of verbal missiles, to say nothing of the other disagreeable consequences which visit those who, in any way, run counter to that chaos of prejudices called public opinion.

My recollections of this time have recently been revived by the perusal of a remarkable document,¹ signed by as many as thirty-eight out of the twenty odd thousand clergymen of the Established Church. It does not appear that the signatories are officially accredited spokesmen of the ecclesiastical corporation to which they belong; but I feel bound to take their word for it, that they are "stewards of the Lord, who have received the Holy Ghost," and, therefore, to accept this memorial as evidence that, though the Evangelicism of my early days may be deposed from its place of power, though so many of the colleagues of the thirty-eight even repudiate the title of Protestants, yet the green bay tree of bibliolatry flourishes as it did sixty years ago. And, as in those good old times, whoso refuses to offer incense to the idol is held to be guilty of "a dishonour to God," imperilling his salvation.

It is to the credit of the perspicacity of the memorialists that they discern the real nature of the Controverted Question of the age. They are awake to the unquestionable fact that, if Scripture has been discovered "not to be worthy of unquestioning belief," faith "in the supernatural itself" is, so far, undermined. And I may congratulate myself upon such weighty confirmation of an opinion in which I have had the fortune

¹ *Declaration on the Truth of Holy Scripture. The Times, 18th December, 1891.*

to anticipate them. But whether it is more to the credit of the courage, than to the intelligence, of the thirty eight that they should go on to proclaim that the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments "declare incontrovertibly the actual historical truth in all records, both of past events and of the delivery of predictions to be thereafter fulfilled," must be left to the coming generation to decide.

The interest which attaches to this singular document will, I think, be based by most thinking men, not upon what it is, but upon that of which it is a sign. It is an open secret, that the memorial is put forth as a counterblast to a manifestation of opinion of a contrary character, on the part of certain members of the same ecclesiastical body, who therefore have, as I suppose, an equal right to declare themselves "stewards of the Lord and recipients of the Holy Ghost." In fact, the stream of tendency towards Naturalism, the course of which I have briefly traced, has, of late years, flowed so strongly, that even the Churches have begun, I dare not say to drift, but, at any rate, to swing at their moorings. Within the pale of the Anglican establishment, I venture to doubt, whether, at this moment, there are as many thorough-going defenders of "plenary inspiration" as there were timid questioners of that doctrine, half a century ago. Commentaries, sanctioned by the highest authority, give up the "actual historical truth" of the cosmogonical and diluvial narratives. University professors of deservedly high repute accept the critical decision that the Hexateuch is a compilation, in which the share of Moses, either as author or as editor, is not quite so clearly demonstrable as it might be; highly placed Divines tell us that the pre-Abrahamic Scripture narratives may be ignored; that the book of Daniel may be regarded as a patriotic romance of the second century B.C.; that the words of the writer of the fourth Gospel are not always to be distinguished from those

which he puts into the mouth of Jesus. Conservative, but conscientious, revisers decide that whole passages, some of dogmatic and some of ethical importance, are interpolations. An uneasy sense of the weakness of the dogma of Biblical infallibility seems to be at the bottom of a prevailing tendency once more to substitute the authority of the "Church" for that of the Bible. In my old age, it has happened to me to be taken to task for regarding Christianity as a "religion of a book" as gravely as, in my youth, I should have been reprehended for doubting that proposition. It is a no less interesting symptom that the State Church seems more and more anxious to repudiate all complicity with the principles of the Protestant Reformation and to call itself "Anglo-Catholic." Inspiration, deprived of its old intelligible sense, is watered down into a mystification. The Scriptures are, indeed, inspired; but they contain a wholly undefined and indefinable "human element"; and this unfortunate intruder is converted into a sort of biblical whipping-boy. Whatsoever scientific investigation, historical or physical, proves to be erroneous, the "human element" bears the blame: while the divine inspiration of such statements, as by their nature are out of reach of proof or disproof, is still asserted with all the vigour inspired by conscious safety from attack. Though the proposal to treat the Bible "like any other book" which caused so much scandal, forty years ago, may not yet be generally accepted, and though Bishop Colenso's criticisms may still lie, formally, under ecclesiastical ban, yet the Church has not wholly turned a deaf ear to the voice of the scientific tempter; and many a coy divine, while "crying I will ne'er consent," has consented to the proposals of that scientific criticism which the memorialists renounce and denounce.

A humble layman, to whom it would seem the height of presumption to assume even the unconsidered dignity

of a "steward of science," may well find this conflict of apparently equal ecclesiastical authorities perplexing—suggestive, indeed, of the wisdom of postponing attention to either, until the question of precedence between them is settled. And this course will probably appear the more advisable, the more closely the fundamental position of the memorialists is examined.

"No opinion of the fact or form of Divine Revelation, founded on literary criticism [and I suppose I may add historical, or physical, criticism] of the Scriptures themselves, can be admitted to interfere with the traditionary testimony of the Church, when that has been once ascertained and verified by appeal to antiquity."¹

Grant that it is "the traditionary testimony of the Church" which guarantees the canonicity of each and all of the books of the Old and New Testaments. Grant also that canonicity means infallibility; yet, according to the thirty-eight, this "traditionary testimony" has to be "ascertained and verified by appeal to antiquity." But "ascertainment and verification" are purely intellectual processes, which must be conducted according to the strict rules of scientific investigation, or be self-convicted of worthlessness. Moreover, before we can set about the appeal to "antiquity," the exact sense of that usefully vague term must be defined by similar means. "Antiquity" may include any number of centuries, great or small; and whether "antiquity" is to comprise the Council of Trent, or to stop a little beyond that of Nicæa, or to come to an end in the time of Irenæus, or in that of Justin Martyr, are knotty questions which can be decided, if at all, only by those critical methods which the signatories treat so cavalierly. And yet the decision of these questions is fundamental, for as the limits of the canonical scriptures vary, so may the dogmas deduced from them require modification. Christianity is one thing, if the fourth

¹ *Declaration*, Article 10.

Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the pastoral Epistles, and the Apocalypse are canonical and (by the hypothesis) infallibly true; and another thing, if they are not. As I have already said, whoso defines the canon defines the creed.

Now it is quite certain with respect to some of these books, such as the Apocalypse and the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the Eastern and the Western Church differed in opinion for centuries; and yet neither the one branch nor the other can have considered its judgment infallible, since they eventually agreed to a transaction by which each gave up its objection to the book patronised by the other. Moreover, the "fathers" argue (in a more or less rational manner) about the canonicity of this or that book, and are by no means above producing evidence, internal and external, in favour of the opinions they advocate. In fact, imperfect as their conceptions of scientific method may be, they not unfrequently used it to the best of their ability. Thus it would appear that though science, like Nature, may be driven out with a fork, ecclesiastical or other, yet she surely comes back again. The appeal to "antiquity" is, in fact, an appeal to science, first to define what antiquity is; secondly, to determine what "antiquity," so defined, says about canonicity; thirdly, to prove that canonicity means infallibility. And when science, largely in the shape of the abhorred "criticism," has answered this appeal, and has shown that "antiquity" used her own methods, however clumsily and imperfectly, she naturally turns round upon the appellants, and demands that they should show cause why, in these days, science should not resume the work the ancients did so imperfectly, and carry it out efficiently.

But no such cause can be shown. If "antiquity" permitted Eusebius, Origen, Tertullian, Irenæus, to argue for the reception of this book into the canon and the rejection of that, upon rational grounds, "antiquity" admitted the whole

principle of modern criticism. If Irenæus produces ridiculous reasons for limiting the Gospels to four, it was open to any one else to produce good reasons (if he had them) for cutting them down to three, or increasing them to five. If the Eastern branch of the Church had a right to reject the Apocalypse and accept the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Western an equal right to accept the Apocalypse and reject the Epistle, down to the fourth century, any other branch would have an equal right, on cause shown, to reject both, or as the Catholic Church afterwards actually did, to accept both.

Thus I cannot but think that the thirty-eight are hoist with their own petard. Their "appeal to antiquity" turns out to be nothing but a roundabout way of appealing to the tribunal the jurisdiction of which they affect to deny. Having rested the world of Christian supernaturalism on the elephant of biblical infallibility, and furnished the elephant with standing ground on the tortoise of "antiquity," they, like their famous Hindoo analogue, have been content to look no further; and have thereby been spared the horror of discovering that the tortoise rests on a grievously fragile construction, to a great extent the work of that very intellectual operation which they anathematise and repudiate.

Moreover, there is another point to be considered. It is of course true that a Christian Church (whether the Christian Church, or not, depends on the connotation of the definite article) existed before the Christian scriptures; and that the infallibility of these depends upon the infallibility of the judgment of the persons who selected the books of which they are composed, out of the mass of literature current among the early Christians. The logical acumen of Augustine showed him that the authority of the Gospel he preached must rest on that of the Church to which he belonged.¹

¹ Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi ecclesiæ Catholicæ me commoveret auctoritas.—*Contra Epistolam Manichæi*, cap. v.

But it is no less true that the Hebrew and the Septuagint versions of most, if not all, of the Old Testament books existed before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth; and that their divine authority is presupposed by, and therefore can hardly depend upon, the religious body constituted by his disciples. As everybody knows, the very conception of a "Christ" is purely Jewish. The validity of the argument from the Messianic prophecies vanishes unless their infallible authority is granted; and, as a matter of fact, whether we turn to the Gospels, the Epistles, or the writings of the early Apologists, the Jewish scriptures are recognised as the highest court of appeal of the Christian.

The proposal to cite Christian "antiquity" as a witness to the infallibility of the Old Testament, when its own claims to authority vanish, if certain propositions contained in the Old Testament are erroneous, hardly satisfies the requirements of lay logic. It is as if a claimant to be sole legatee, under another kind of testament, should offer his assertion as sufficient evidence of the validity of the will. And, even were not such a circular, or rather rotatory argument, that the infallibility of the Bible is testified by the infallible Church, whose infallibility is testified by the infallible Bible, too absurd for serious consideration, it remains permissible to ask, Where and when the Church, during the period of its infallibility, as limited by Anglican dogmatic necessities, has officially decreed the "actual historical truth of all records" in the Old Testament? Was Augustine heretical when he denied the actual historical truth of the record of the Creation? Father Suarez, standing on later Roman tradition, may have a right to declare that he was; but it does not lie in the mouth of those who limit their appeal to that early "antiquity," in which Augustine played so great a part, to say so.

Among the watchers of the course of the world of thought, some view with

delight and some with horror, the recrudescence of Supernaturalism which manifests itself among us, in shapes ranged along the whole flight of steps, which, in this case, separates the sublime from the ridiculous—from Neo Catholicism and Inner-light mysticism, at the top, to unclean things, not worthy of mention in the same breath, at the bottom. In my poor opinion, the importance of these manifestations is often greatly over-estimated. The extant forms of Supernaturalism have deep roots in human nature, and will undoubtedly die hard; but, in these latter days, they have to cope with an enemy whose full strength is only just beginning to be put out, and whose forces, gathering strength year by year, are hemming them round on every side. This enemy is Science, in the acceptation of systematised natural knowledge, which, during the last two centuries, has extended those methods of investigation, the worth of which is confirmed by daily appeal to Nature, to every region in which the Supernatural has hitherto been recognised.

When scientific historical criticism reduced the annals of heroic Greece and of regal Rome to the level of fables; when the unity of authorship of the *Iliad* was successfully assailed by scientific literary criticism; when scientific physical criticism, after exploding the geocentric theory of the universe and reducing the solar system itself to one of millions of groups of like cosmic specks, circling at unimaginable distances from one another through infinite space, showed the supernaturalistic theories of the duration of the earth and of life upon it to be as inadequate as those of its relative dimensions and importance had been; it needed no prophetic gift to see that, sooner or later, the Jewish and the early Christian records would be treated in the same manner; that the authorship of the Hexateuch and of the Gospels would be as severely tested; and that the evidence in favour of the veracity of many of the statements found in the Scriptures would have to be strong

indeed if they were to be opposed to the conclusions of physical science. In point of fact, so far as I can discover, no one competent to judge of the evidential strength of these conclusions ventures now to say that the biblical accounts of the Creation and of the Deluge are true in the natural sense of the words of the narratives. The most modern Reconcilers venture upon is to affirm, that some quite different sense may be put upon the words; and that this non-natural sense may, with a little trouble, be manipulated into some sort of non-contradiction of scientific truth.

My purpose, in an essay¹ which treats of the narrative of the Deluge, was to prove, by physical criticism, that no such event as that described ever took place; to exhibit the untrustworthy character of the narrative demonstrated by literary criticism; and, finally, to account for its origin by producing a form of those ancient legends of pagan Chaldæa, from which the biblical compilation is manifestly derived. I have yet to learn that the main propositions of this essay can be seriously challenged.

In two essays² on the narrative of the Creation, I have endeavoured to controvert the assertion that modern science supports, either the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Gladstone, or any interpretation which is compatible with the general sense of the narrative, quite apart from particular details. The first chapter of Genesis teaches the supernatural creation of the present forms of life; modern science teaches that they have come about by evolution. The first chapter of Genesis teaches the successive origin—firstly, of all the plants; secondly, of all the aquatic and aerial animals; thirdly, of all the terrestrial animals, which now exist—during distinct intervals of time; modern science teaches that, throughout all the duration

¹ *Hasisadra's Adventure.*

² *The Interpreters of Genesis and the Interpreters of Nature and Mr. Gladstone and Genesis.*

of an immensely long past, so far as we have any adequate knowledge of it (that is as far back as the Silurian epoch), plants, aquatic, aerial, and terrestrial animals have co-existed; that the earliest known are unlike those which at present exist; and that the modern species have come into existence as the last terms of a series, the members of which have appeared one after another. Thus, far from confirming the account in Genesis, the results of modern science, so far as they go, are in principle, as in detail, hopelessly discordant with it.

Yet, if the pretensions to infallibility set up, not by the ancient Hebrew writings themselves, but by the ecclesiastical champions and friends from whom they may well pray to be delivered, thus shatter themselves against the rock of natural knowledge, in respect of the two most important of all events, the origin of things and the palingenesis of terrestrial life, what historical credit dare any serious thinker attach to the narratives of the fabrication of Eve, of the Fall, of the commerce between the *Bene Elohim* and the daughters of men, which lie between the creational and the diluvial legends? And, if these are to lose all historical worth, what becomes of the infallibility of those who, according to the later scriptures, have accepted them, argued from them, and staked far-reaching dogmatic conclusions upon their historical accuracy?

It is the merest ostrich policy for contemporary ecclesiasticism to try to hide its Hexateuchal head—in the hope that the inseparable connection of its body with pre-Abrahamic legends may be overlooked. The question will still be asked, If the first nine chapters of the Pentateuch are unhistorical, how is the historical accuracy of the remainder to be guaranteed? What more intrinsic claim has the story of the Exodus than that of the Deluge, to belief? If God did not walk in the Garden of Eden, how can we be assured that he spoke from Sinai?

In other essays¹ I have endeavoured to show that sober and well-founded physical and literary criticism plays no less havoc with the doctrine that the canonical scriptures of the New Testament “declare incontrovertibly the actual historical truth in all records.” We are told that the Gospels contain a true revelation of the spiritual world—a proposition which, in one sense of the word “spiritual,” I should not think it necessary to dispute. But, when it is taken to signify that everything we are told about the world of spirits in these books is infallibly true; that we are bound to accept the demonology which constitutes an inseparable part of their teaching; and to profess belief in a Supernaturalism as gross as that of any primitive people—it is at any rate permissible to ask why? Science may be unable to define the limits of possibility, but it cannot escape from the moral obligation to weigh the evidence in favour of any alleged wonderful occurrence; and I have endeavoured to show that the evidence for the Gadarene miracle is altogether worthless. We have simply three, partially discrepant, versions of a story, about the primitive form, the origin, and the authority for which we know absolutely nothing. But the evidence in favour of the Gadarene miracle is as good as that for any other.

Elsewhere I have pointed out that it is utterly beside the mark to declaim against these conclusions on the ground of their asserted tendency to deprive mankind of the consolations of the Christian faith, and to destroy the foundations of morality: still less to brand them with the question-begging vituperative appellation of “infidelity.” The point is not whether they are wicked; but, whether, from the point of view of scientific method, they are irrefragably true. If they are they will

¹ *Agnosticism; The Value of Witness to the Miraculous; Agnosticism: a Rejoinder; Agnosticism and Christianity; The Keepers of the Herd of Swine; and Illustrations of Mr. Gladstone's Controversial Methods.*

be accepted in time, whether they are wicked or not wicked. Nature, so far as we have been able to attain to any insight into her ways, reckes little about consolation and makes for righteousness by very round-about paths. And, at any rate, whatever may be possible for other people, it is becoming less and less possible for the man who puts his faith in scientific methods of ascertaining truth, and is accustomed to have that faith justified by daily experience, to be consciously false to his principle in any matter. But the number of such men, driven into the use of scientific methods of inquiry and taught to trust them, by their education, their daily professional and business needs, is increasing and will continually increase. The phraseology of Supernaturalism may remain on men's lips, but in practice they are Naturalists. The magistrate who listens with devout attention to the precept "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" on Sunday, on Monday dismisses, as intrinsically absurd, a charge of bewitching a cow brought against some old woman; the superintendent of a lunatic asylum who substituted exorcism for rational modes of treatment would have but a short tenure of office; even parish clerks doubt the utility of prayers for rain, so long as the wind is in the east; and an outbreak of pestilence sends men, not to the churches, but to the drains. In spite of prayers for the success of our arms and *Te Deums* for victory, our real faith is in big battalions and keeping our powder dry; in knowledge of the science of warfare; in energy, courage, and discipline. In these, as in all other practical affairs, we act on the aphorism "*Laborare est orare*"; we admit that intelligent work is the only acceptable worship; and that, whether there be a Supernature or not, our business is with Nature.

It is important to note that the principle of the scientific Naturalism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, in which the intellectual movement of the Renaissance has culminated, and

which was first clearly formulated by Descartes, leads not to the denial of the existence of any Supernature;¹ but simply to the denial of the validity of the evidence adduced in favour of this, or of that, extant form of Supernaturalism.

Looking at the matter from the most rigidly scientific point of view, the assumption that, amidst the myriads of worlds scattered through endless space, there can be no intelligence as much greater than man's as his is greater than a blackbeetle's; no being endowed with powers of influencing the course of Nature as much greater than his as his is greater than a snail's, seems to me not merely baseless, but impertinent. Without stepping beyond the analogy of that which is known, it is easy to people the cosmos with entities, in ascending scale, until we reach something practically indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. If our intelligence can, in some matters, surely reproduce the past of thousands of years ago and anticipate the future, thousands of years hence, it is clearly within the limits of possibility that some greater intellect, even of the same order, may be able to mirror the whole past and the whole future; if the universe is penetrated by a medium of such a nature that a magnetic needle on the earth answers to a commotion in the sun, an omnipresent agent is also conceivable; if our insignificant knowledge gives us some influence over events, practical omniscience may confer indefinitely greater power. Finally, if evidence that a thing may be were equivalent to proof that it is, analogy might justify the construction of a naturalistic theology and demonology not less wonderful than

¹ I employ the words "Supernature" and "Supernatural" in their popular senses. For myself, I am bound to say that the term "Nature" covers the totality of that which is. The world of psychical phenomena appears to me to be as much part of "Nature" as the world of physical phenomena; and I am unable to perceive any justification for cutting the Universe into two halves, one natural and one supernatural.

the current supernatural ; just as it might justify the peopling of Mars, or of Jupiter, with living forms to which terrestrial biology offers no parallel. Until human life is longer and the duties of the present press less heavily, I do not think that wise men will occupy themselves with Jovian, or Martian, natural history ; and they will probably agree to a verdict of "not proven" in respect of naturalistic theology, taking refuge in that agnostic confession, which appears to me to be

the only position for people who object to say that they know what they are quite aware they do not know. As to the interests of morality, I am disposed to think that if mankind could be got to act up to this last principle in every relation of life, a reformation would be effected such as the world has not yet seen ; an approximation to the millennium, such as no supernaturalistic religion has ever yet succeeded, or seems likely ever to succeed, in effecting.

THE VALUE OF WITNESS TO THE MIRACULOUS

[1889]

CHARLES, or more properly, Karl, King of the Franks, consecrated Roman Emperor in St. Peter's on Christmas Day, A.D. 800, and known to posterity as the Great (chiefly by his agglutinative Gallicised denomination of Charlemagne), was a man great in all ways, physically and mentally. Within a couple of centuries after his death Charlemagne became the centre of innumerable legends ; and the myth-making process does not seem to have been sensibly interfered with by the existence of sober and truthful histories of the Emperor and of the times which immediately preceded and followed his reign, by a contemporary writer who occupied a high and confidential position in his court, and in that of his successor. This was one Eginhard, or Einhard, who appears to have been born about A.D. 770, and spent his youth at the court, being educated along with Charles's sons. There is excellent contemporary testimony not only to Eginhard's existence, but to his abilities, and to the place which he occupied in the circle of the intimate friends of the great ruler whose life he subsequently wrote. In fact, there is as good evidence of Eginhard's existence, of his official position, and of his being the author of the chief works attributed to him, as can reason-

ably be expected in the case of a man who lived more than a thousand years ago, and was neither a great king nor a great warrior. The works are—1. "The Life of the Emperor Karl." 2. "The Annals of the Franks." 3. "Letters." 4. "The History of the Translation of the Blessed Martyrs of Christ, SS. Marcellinus and Petrus."

It is to the last, as one of the most singular and interesting records of the period during which the Roman world passed into that of the Middle Ages, that I wish to direct attention.¹ It was written in the ninth century, somewhere, apparently, about the year 830, when Eginhard, ailing in health and weary of political life, had withdrawn to the monastery of Seligenstadt, of which he was the founder. A manuscript copy of the work, made in the tenth century, and once the property of the monastery of St. Bavon on the Scheldt, of which Eginhard was abbot, is still extant, and there is no reason to believe that, in this copy, the original has been in any way interpolated or otherwise tampered with. The main features of

¹ My citations are made from Teulet's *Einhardi omnia quæ extant opera*, Paris, 1840-1843, which contains a biography of the author, a history of the text, with translations into French, and many valuable annotations.

the strange story contained in the "Historia Translationis" are set forth in the following pages, in which, in regard to all matters of importance, I shall adhere as closely as possible to Eginhard's own words.

While I was still at Court, busied with secular affairs, I often thought of the leisure which I hoped one day to enjoy in a solitary place, far away from the crowd, with which the liberality of Prince Louis, whom I then served, had provided me. This place is situated in that part of Germany which lies between the Neckar and the Maine,¹ and is nowadays called the Odenwald by those who live in and about it. And here having built, according to my capacity and resources, not only houses and permanent dwellings, but also a basilica fitted for the performance of divine service and of no mean style of construction, I began to think to what saint or martyr I could best dedicate it. A good deal of time had passed while my thoughts fluctuated about this matter, when it happened that a certain deacon of the Roman Church, named Deusdona, arrived at the Court for the purpose of seeking the favour of the King in some affairs in which he was interested. He remained some time; and then, having transacted his business, he was about to return to Rome, when one day, moved by courtesy to a stranger, we invited him to a modest refectory; and while talking of many things at table, mention was made of the translation of the body of the blessed Sebastian,² and of the neglected tombs of the martyrs, of which there is such a prodigious number at Rome; and the conversation having turned towards the dedication of our new basilica, I began to inquire how it might be possible for me to obtain some of the true relics of the saints which rest at Rome. He at first hesitated, and declared that he did not know how that could be done. But observing that I was both anxious and curious about the subject, he promised to give me an answer some other day.

When I returned to the question some time afterwards, he immediately drew from his bosom a paper, which he begged me to read when I was alone, and to tell him what I was disposed to think of that which was therein stated. I took the paper and, as he desired, read it alone and in secret. (Cap. 1, 2, 3.)

I shall have occasion to return to Deacon Deusdona's conditions, and to what happened after Eginhard's accept-

ance of them. Suffice it, for the present, to say that Eginhard's notary, Ratleicus (Ratleig), was despatched to Rome and succeeded in securing two bodies, supposed to be those of the holy martyrs Marcellinus and Petrus; and when he had got as far on his homeward journey as the Burgundian town of Solothurn, or Soleure,¹ notary Ratleig despatched to his master, at St. Bavon, a letter announcing the success of his mission.

As soon as by reading it I was assured of the arrival of the saints, I despatched a confidential messenger to Maestricht to gather together priests, other clerics, and also laymen, to go out to meet the coming saints as speedily as possible. And he and his companions, having lost no time, after a few days met those who had charge of the saints at Solothurn. Joined with them, and with a vast crowd of people who gathered from all parts, singing hymns, and amidst great and universal rejoicings, they travelled quickly to the city of Argentoratum, which is now called Strasburg. Thence embarking on the Rhine, they came to the place called Portus,² and landing on the east bank of the river, at the fifth station thence they arrived at Michilinstadt,³ accompanied by an immense multitude, praising God. This place is in that forest of Germany which in modern times is called the Odenwald, and about six leagues from the Maine. And here, having found a basilica recently built by me, but not yet consecrated, they carried the sacred remains into it and deposited them therein, as if it were to be their final resting-place. As soon as all this was reported to me I travelled thither as quickly as I could. (Cap. ii. 14.)

Three days after Eginhard's arrival began the series of wonderful events which he narrates, and for which we have his personal guarantee. The first thing that he notices is the dream of a servant of Ratleig, the notary, who, being set to watch the holy relics in the church after vespers, went to sleep and, during his slumbers, had a vision of two pigeons, one white and one gray and white, which came and sat upon the bier over the relics; while, at the same time,

¹ Now included in Western Switzerland.

² Probably, according to Teulet, the present Sandhofer-fahrt, a little below the embouchure of the Neckar.

³ The present Michilstadt, thirty miles N.E. of Heidelberg.

¹ At present included in the Duchies of Hesse-Darmstadt and Baden.

² This took place in the year 826 A.D. The relics were brought from Rome and deposited in the Church of St. Medardus at Soissons.

a voice ordered the man to tell his master that the holy martyrs had chosen another resting-place and desired to be transported thither without delay.

Unfortunately, the saints seem to have forgotten to mention where they wished to go ; and, with the most anxious desire to gratify their smallest wishes, Eginhard was naturally greatly perplexed what to do. While in this state of mind, he was one day contemplating his "great and wonderful treasure, more precious than all the gold in the world," when it struck him that the chest in which the relics were contained was quite unworthy of its contents ; and, after vespers, he gave orders to one of the sacristans to take the measure of the chest in order that a more fitting shrine might be constructed. The man, having lighted a wax candle and raised the pall which covered the relics, in order to carry out his master's orders, was astonished and terrified to observe that the chest was covered with a blood-like exudation (*loculum mirum in modum humore sanguineo undique distillantem*), and at once sent a message to Eginhard.

Then I and those priests who accompanied me beheld this stupendous miracle, worthy of all admiration. For just as when it is going to rain, pillars and slabs and marble images exude moisture, and, as it were, sweat, so the chest which contained the most sacred relics was found moist with the blood exuding on all sides. (Cap. ii. 16.)

Three days' fast was ordained in order that the meaning of the portent might be ascertained. All that happened, however, was that, at the end of that time, the "blood," which had been exuding in drops all the while, dried up. Eginhard is careful to say that the liquid "had a saline taste, something like that of tears, and was thin as water, though of the colour of true blood," and he clearly thinks this satisfactory evidence that it was blood.

The same night, another servant had a vision, in which still more imperative orders for the removal of the relics were given ; and, from that time forth, "not

a single night passed without one, two, or even three of our companions receiving revelations in dreams that the bodies of the saints were to be transferred from that place to another." At last a priest, Hildfrid, saw, in a dream, a venerable white-haired man in a priest's vestments, who bitterly reproached Eginhard for not obeying the repeated orders of the saints ; and, upon this, the journey was commenced. Why Eginhard delayed obedience to these repeated visions so long does not appear. He does not say so, in so many words, but the general tenor of the narrative leads one to suppose that Mulinheim (afterwards Seligenstadt) is the "solitary place" in which he had built the church which awaited dedication. In that case, all the people about him would know that he desired that the saints should go there. If a glimmering of secular sense led him to be a little suspicious about the real cause of the unanimity of the visionary beings who manifested themselves to his *entourage* in favour of moving on, he does not say so.

At the end of the first day's journey, the precious relics were deposited in the church of St. Martin, in the village of Ostheim. Hither, a paralytic nun (*sanctimonialis quædam paralytica*) of the name of Ruodlang was brought, in a car, by her friends and relatives from a monastery a league off. She spent the night watching and praying by the bier of the saints ; "and health returning to all her members, on the morrow she went back to her place whence she came, on her feet, nobody supporting her, or in any way giving her assistance." (Cap. ii. 19.)

On the second day, the relics were carried to Upper Mulinheim ; and, finally, in accordance with the orders of the martyrs, deposited in the church of that place, which was therefore renamed Seligenstadt. Here, Daniel, a beggar boy of fifteen, and so bent that "he could not look at the sky without lying on his back," collapsed and fell down during the celebration of the Mass.

"Thus he lay a long time, as if asleep, and all his limbs straightening and his flesh strengthening (*recepta firmitate nervorum*), he arose before our eyes, quite well." (Cap. ii. 20.)

Some time afterwards an old man entered the church on his hands and knees, being unable to use his limbs properly :—

He, in presence of all of us, by the power of God and the merits of the blessed martyrs, in the same hour in which he entered was so perfectly cured that he walked without so much as a stick. And he said that, though he had been deaf for five years, his deafness had ceased along with the palsy. (Cap. iii. 33.)

Eginhard was now obliged to return to the Court at Aix-la-Chapelle, where his duties kept him through the winter ; and he is careful to point out that the later miracles which he proceeds to speak of are known to him only at second hand. But, as he naturally observes, having seen such wonderful events with his own eyes, why should he doubt similar narrations when they are received from trustworthy sources ?

Wonderful stories these are indeed, but as they are, for the most part, of the same general character as those already recounted, they may be passed over. There is, however, an account of a possessed maiden which is worth attention. This is set forth in a memoir, the principal contents of which are the speeches of a demon who declared himself to possess the singular appellation of "Wiggo," and revealed himself in the presence of many witnesses, before the altar, close to the relics of the blessed martyrs. It is noteworthy that the revelations appear to have been made in the shape of replies to the questions of the exorcising priest ; and there is no means of judging how far the answers are, really, only the questions to which the patient replied yes or no.

The possessed girl, about sixteen years of age, was brought by her parents to the basilica of the martyrs.

When she approached the tomb containing the sacred bodies, the priest, according to

custom, read the formula of exorcism over her head. When he began to ask how and when the demon had entered her, she answered, not in the tongue of the barbarians, which alone the girl knew, but in the Roman tongue. And when the priest was astonished and asked how she came to know Latin, when her parents, who stood by, were wholly ignorant of it, "Thou hast never seen my parents," was the reply. To this the priest, "Whence art thou, then, if these are not thy parents?" And the demon, by the mouth of the girl, "I am a follower and disciple of Satan, and for a long time I was gate-keeper (janitor) in hell ; but, for some years, along with eleven companions, I have ravaged the kingdom of the Franks." (Cap. v. 49.)

He then goes on to tell how they blasted the crops and scattered pestilence among beasts and men, because of the prevalent wickedness of the people.¹

The enumeration of all these iniquities, in oratorical style, takes up a whole octavo page ; and at the end it is stated, "All these things the demon spoke in Latin by the mouth of the girl."

And when the priest imperatively ordered him to come out, "I shall go," said he, "not in obedience to you, but on account of the power of the saints, who do not allow me to remain any longer." And, having said this, he threw the girl down on the floor and there compelled her to lie prostrate for a time, as though she slumbered. After a little while, however, he going away, the girl, by the power of Christ and the merits of the blessed martyrs, as it were awaking from sleep, rose up quite well, to the astonishment of all present ; nor after the demon had gone out was she able to speak Latin : so that it was plain enough that it was not she who had spoken in that tongue, but the demon by her mouth. (Cap. v. 51.)

If the "Historia Translationis" contained nothing more than has been laid before the reader, up to this time, disbelief in the miracles of which it gives so precise and full a record might well be regarded as hyper-scepticism. It might fairly be said, Here you have a man, whose high character, acute intelligence, and large instruction are certified by eminent contemporaries ; a man who stood high in the confidence of one of the greatest rulers of any age,

¹ In the Middle Ages one of the most favourite accusations against witches was that they committed just these enormities.

and whose other works prove him to be an accurate and judicious narrator of ordinary events. This man tells you, in language which bears the stamp of sincerity, of things which happened within his own knowledge, or within that of persons in whose veracity he has entire confidence, while he appeals to his sovereign and the court as witnesses of others; what possible ground can there be for disbelieving him?

Well, it is hard upon Eginhard to say so, but it is exactly the honesty and sincerity of the man which are his undoing as a witness to the miraculous. He himself makes it quite obvious that when his profound piety comes on the stage, his good sense and even his perception of right and wrong, make their exit. Let us go back to the point at which we left him, secretly perusing the letter of Deacon Deusdona. As he tells us, its contents were

that he [the deacon] had many relics of saints at home, and that he would give them to me if I would furnish him with the means of returning to Rome; he had observed that I had two mules, and if I would let him have one of them and would despatch with him a confidential servant to take charge of the relics, he would at once send them to me. This plausibly expressed proposition pleased me, and I made up my mind to test the value of the somewhat ambiguous promise at once;¹ so giving him the mule and money for his journey I ordered my notary Ratleig (who already desired to go to Rome to offer his devotions there) to go with him. Therefore, having left Aix-la-Chapelle (where the Emperor and his Court resided at the time) they came to Soissons. Here they spoke with Hildoin, abbot of the monastery of St. Medardus, because the said deacon had assured him that he had the means of placing in his possession the body of the blessed Tiburtius the Martyr. Attracted by which promises he (Hildoin) sent with them a certain priest, Hunus by name, a sharp man (*hominem callidum*), whom he ordered to receive and bring back the body of the martyr in question. And so, resuming their journey, they proceeded to Rome as fast as they could. (Cap. i. 3.)

¹ It is pretty clear that Eginhard had his doubts about the deacon, whose pledges he qualifies as *sponsiones incertæ*. But, to be sure, he wrote after events which fully justified scepticism.

Unfortunately, a servant of the notary, one Reginbald, fell ill of a tertian fever, and impeded the progress of the party. However, this piece of adversity had its sweet uses; for three days before they reached Rome, Reginbald had a vision. Somebody habited as a deacon appeared to him and asked why his master was in such a hurry to get to Rome; and when Reginbald explained their business, this visionary deacon, who seems to have taken the measure of his brother in the flesh with some accuracy, told him not by any means to expect that Deusdona would fulfil his promises. Moreover, taking the servant by the hand, he led him to the top of a high mountain and, showing him Rome (where the man had never been), pointed out a church, adding "Tell Ratleig the thing he wants is hidden there; let him get it as quickly as he can and go back to his master." By way of a sign that the order was authoritative, the servant was promised that, from that time forth, his fever should disappear. And as the fever did vanish to return—no more, the faith of Eginhard's people in Deacon Deusdona naturally vanished with it (*et fidem diaconi promissis non haberent*). Nevertheless, they put up at the deacon's house near St. Peter ad Vincula. But time went on and no relics made their appearance, while the notary and the priest were put off with all sorts of excuses—the brother to whom the relics had been confided was gone to Beneventum and not expected back for some time, and so on—until Ratleig and Hunus began to despair, and were minded to return, *infecto negotio*.

But my notary, calling to mind his servant's dream, proposed to his companion that they should go to the cemetery which their host had talked about without him. So, having found and hired a guide, they went in the first place to the basilica of the blessed Tiburtius in the Via Labicana, about three thousand paces from the town, and cautiously and carefully inspected the tomb of that martyr, in order to discover whether it could be opened without any one being the wiser. Then they descended into the adjoining crypt, in which the bodies of the blessed martyrs of Christ, Marcellinus and

Petrus, were buried ; and, having made out the nature of their tomb, they went away thinking their host would not know what they had been about. But things fell out differently from what they had imagined. (Cap. i. 7.)

In fact, Deacon Deusdona, who doubtless kept an eye on his guests, knew all about their manœuvres and made haste to offer his services, in order that, "with the help of God" (*si Deus votis eorum favere dignaretur*), they should all work together. The deacon was evidently alarmed lest they should succeed without *his* help.

So, by way of preparation for the contemplated *vol avec affraction* they fasted three days ; and then, at night, without being seen, they betook themselves to the basilica of St. Tiburtius, and tried to break open the altar erected over his remains. But the marble proving too solid, they descended to the crypt, and, "having evoked our Lord Jesus Christ and adored the holy martyrs," they proceeded to prise off the stone which covered the tomb, and thereby exposed the body of the most sacred martyr, Marcellinus, "whose head rested on a marble tablet on which his name was inscribed." The body was taken up with the greatest veneration, wrapped in a rich covering, and given over to the keeping of the deacon and his brother, Lunison, while the stone was replaced with such care that no sign of the theft remained.

As sacrilegious proceedings of this kind were punishable with death by the Roman law, it seems not unnatural that Deacon Deusdona should have become uneasy, and have urged Ratleig to be satisfied with what he had got and be off with his spoils. But the notary having thus cleverly captured the blessed Marcellinus, thought it a pity he should be parted from the blessed Petrus, side by side with whom he had rested, for five hundred years and more, in the same sepulchre (as Eginhard pathetically observes) ; and the pious man could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, until he had compassed his desire to re-unite

the saintly colleagues. This time, apparently in consequence of Deusdona's opposition to any further resurrectionist doings, he took counsel with a Greek monk, one Basil, and, accompanied by Hunus, but saying nothing to Deusdona, they committed another sacrilegious burglary, securing this time, not only the body of the blessed Petrus, but a quantity of dust, which they agreed the priest should take, and tell his employer that it was the remains of the blessed Tiburtius. How Deusdona was "squared," and what he got for his not very valuable complicity in these transactions, does not appear. But at last the relics were sent off in charge of Lunison, the brother of Deusdona, and the priest Hunus, as far as Pavia, while Ratleig stopped behind for a week to see if the robbery was discovered, and, presumably, to act as a blind, if any hue and cry was raised. But, as everything remained quiet, the notary betook himself to Pavia, where he found Lunison and Hunus awaiting his arrival. The notary's opinion of the character of his worthy colleagues, however, may be gathered from the fact that having persuaded them to set out in advance along a road which he told them he was about to take, he immediately adopted another route, and, travelling by way of St. Maurice and the Lake of Geneva, eventually reached Soleure.

Eginhard tells all this story with the most naïve air of unconsciousness that there is anything remarkable about an abbot, and a high officer of state to boot, being an accessory, both before and after the fact, to a most gross and scandalous act of sacrilegious and burglarious robbery. And an amusing sequel to the story proves that, where relics were concerned, his friend Hildoin, another high ecclesiastical dignitary, was even less scrupulous than himself.

On going to the palace early one morning, after the saints were safely bestowed at Seligenstadt, he found Hildoin waiting for an audience in the Emperor's antechamber, and began to talk to him about the miracle of the

bloody exudation. In the course of conversation, Eginhard happened to allude to the remarkable fineness of the garment of the blessed Marcellinus. Whereupon Abbot Hildoin observed (to Eginhard's stupefaction) that his observation was quite correct. Much astonished at this remark from a person who was supposed not to have seen the relics, Eginhard asked him how he knew that? Upon this, Hildoin saw that he had better make a clean breast of it, and he told the following story, which he had received from his priestly agent, Hunus. While Hunus and Lunison were at Pavia, waiting for Eginhard's notary, Hunus (according to his own account) had robbed the robbers. The relics were placed in a church; and a number of laymen and clerics, of whom Hunus was one, undertook to keep watch over them. One night, however, all the watchers, save the wide-awake Hunus, went to sleep; and then, according to the story which this "sharp" ecclesiastic foisted upon his patron,

it was borne in upon his mind that there must be some great reason why all the people, except himself, had suddenly become somnolent; and, determining to avail himself of the opportunity thus offered (*oblata occasione utendum*), he rose and, having lighted a candle, silently approached the chests. Then, having burnt through the threads of the seals with the flame of the candle, he quickly opened the chests, which had no locks;¹ and, taking out portions of each of the bodies which were thus exposed, he closed the chests and connected the burnt ends of the threads with the seals again, so that they appeared not to have been touched; and, no one having seen him, he returned to his place. (Cap. iii. 23.)

Hildoin went on to tell Eginhard that Hunus at first declared to him that these purloined relics belonged to St. Tiburtius; but afterwards confessed, as a great secret, how he had come by

¹ The words are *scrinia sine clave*, which seems to mean "having no key." But the circumstances forbid the idea of breaking open.

them, and he wound up his discourse thus:

They have a place of honour beside St. Medardus, where they are worshipped with great veneration by all the people; but whether we may keep them or not is for your judgment. (Cap. iii. 23.)

Poor Eginhard was thrown into a state of great perturbation of mind by this revelation. An acquaintance of his had recently told him of a rumour that was spread about that Hunus had contrived to abstract *all* the remains of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus while Eginhard's agents were in a drunken sleep; and that, while the real relics were in Abbot Hildoin's hands at St. Medardus, the Shrine at Seligenstadt contained nothing but a little dust. Though greatly annoyed by this "execrable rumour, spread everywhere by the subtlety of the devil," Eginhard had doubtless comforted himself by his supposed knowledge of its falsity, and he only now discovered how considerable a foundation there was for the scandal. There was nothing for it but to insist upon the return of the stolen treasures. One would have thought that the holy man, who had admitted himself to be knowingly a receiver of stolen goods, would have made instant restitution and begged only for absolution. But Eginhard intimates that he had very great difficulty in getting his brother abbot to see that even restitution was necessary.

Hildoin's proceedings were not of such a nature as to lead any one to place implicit confidence in anything he might say; still less had his agent, priest Hunus, established much claim to confidence; and it is not surprising that Eginhard should have lost no time in summoning his notary and Lunison to his presence, in order that he might hear what they had to say about the business. They, however, at once protested that priest Hunus's story was a parcel of lies, and that after the relics left Rome no one had any opportunity of meddling with them

Moreover, Lunison, throwing himself at Eginhard's feet, confessed with many tears what actually took place. It will be remembered that after the body of St. Marcellinus was abstracted from its tomb, Ratleig deposited it in the house of Deusdona, in charge of the latter's brother, Lunison. But Hunus being very much disappointed that he could not get hold of the body of St. Tiburtius, and afraid to go back to his abbot empty-handed, bribed Lunison with four pieces of gold and five of silver to give him access to the chest. This Lunison did, and Hunus helped himself to as much as would fill a gallon-measure (*vas sextarii mensuram*) of the sacred remains. Eginhard's indignation at the "rapine" of this "nequissimus nebulo" is exquisitely droll. It would appear that the adage about the receiver being as bad as the thief was not current in the ninth century.

Let us now briefly sum up the history of the acquisition of the relics. Eginhard makes a contract with Deusdona for the delivery of certain relics which the latter says he possesses. Eginhard makes no inquiry how he came by them; otherwise, the transaction is innocent enough.

Deusdona turns out to be a swindler, and has no relics. Thereupon Eginhard's agent, after due fasting and prayer, breaks open the tombs and helps himself.

Eginhard discovers by the self-betrayal of his brother abbot, Hildoin, that portions of his relics have been stolen and conveyed to the latter. With much ado he succeeds in getting them back.

Hildoin's agent, Hunus, in delivering these stolen goods to him, at first declared they were the relics of St. Tiburtius, which Hildoin desired him to obtain; but afterwards invented a story of their being the product of a theft, which the providential drowsiness of his companions enabled him to perpetrate, from the relics which Hildoin well knew were the property of his friend.

Lunison, on the contrary, swears that all this story is false, and that he himself

was bribed by Hunus to allow him to steal what he pleased from the property confided to his own and his brother's care by their guest Ratleig. And the honest notary himself seems to have no hesitation about lying and stealing to any extent, where the acquisition of relics is the object in view.

For a parallel to these transactions one must read a police report of the doings of a "long firm" or of a set of horse-coupers; yet Eginhard seems to be aware of nothing, but that he has been rather badly used by his friend Hildoin, and the "nequissimus nebulo" Hunus.

It is not easy for a modern Protestant, still less for any one who has the least tincture of scientific culture, whether physical or historical, to picture to himself the state of mind of a man of the ninth century, however cultivated, enlightened, and sincere he may have been. His deepest convictions, his most cherished hopes, were bound up with the belief in the miraculous. Life was a constant battle between saints and demons for the possession of the souls of men. The most superstitious among our modern countrymen turn to supernatural agencies only when natural causes seem insufficient; to Eginhard and his friends the supernatural was the rule; and the sufficiency of natural causes was allowed only when there was nothing to suggest others.

Moreover, it must be recollected that the possession of miracle-working relics was greatly coveted, not only on high, but on very low grounds. To a man like Eginhard, the mere satisfaction of the religious sentiment was obviously a powerful attraction. But, more than this, the possession of such a treasure was an immense practical advantage. If the saints were duly flattered and worshipped, there was no telling what benefits might result from their interposition on your behalf. For physical evils, access to the shrine was like the grant of the use of a universal pill and ointment manufactory; and pilgrimages

thereto might suffice to cleanse the performers from any amount of sin. A letter to Lupus, subsequently Abbot of Ferrara, written while Eginhard was smarting under the grief caused by the loss of his much-loved wife Imma, affords a striking insight into the current view of the relation between the glorified saints and their worshippers. The writer shows that he is anything but satisfied with the way in which he has been treated by the blessed martyrs whose remains he has taken such pains to "convey" to Seligenstadt, and to honour there as they would never have been honoured in their Roman obscurity.

It is an aggravation of my grief and a re-opening of my wound, that our vows have been of no avail, and that the faith which we placed in the merits and intervention of the martyrs has been utterly disappointed.

We may admit, then, without impeachment of Eginhard's sincerity, or of his honour under all ordinary circumstances, that when piety, self-interest, the glory of the Church in general, and that of the church at Seligenstadt in particular, all pulled one way, even the workaday principles of morality were disregarded; and, *a fortiori*, anything like proper investigation of the reality of alleged miracles was thrown to the winds.

And if this was the condition of mind of such a man as Eginhard, what is it not legitimate to suppose may have been that of Deacon Deusdona, Lunison, Hunus, and company, thieves and cheats by their own confession, or of the probably hysterical nun, or of the professional beggars, for whose incapacity to walk and straighten themselves there is no guarantee but their own? Who is to make sure that the exorcist of the demon Wiggo was not just such another priest as Hunus; and is it not at least possible, when Eginhard's servants dreamed, night after night, in such a curiously coincident fashion, that a careful inquirer might have found they were very anxious to please their master?

Quite apart from deliberate and conscious fraud (which is a rarer thing than is often supposed), people whose mythopœic faculty is once stirred, are capable of saying the thing that is not, and of acting as they should not, to an extent which is hardly imaginable by persons who are not so easily affected by the contagion of blind faith. There is no falsity so gross that honest men and, still more, virtuous women, anxious to promote a good cause, will not lend themselves to it without any clear consciousness of the moral bearings of what they are doing. The cases of miraculously-effected cures of which Eginhard is ocular witness appear to belong to classes of disease in which malingering is possible or hysteria presumable. Without modern means of diagnosis, the names given to them are quite worthless. One "miracle," however, in which the patient, a woman, was cured by the mere sight of the church in which the relics of the blessed martyrs lay, is an unmistakable case of dislocation of the lower jaw; and it is obvious that, as not unfrequently happens in such accidents in weakly subjects, the jaw slipped suddenly back into place, perhaps in consequence of a jolt, as the woman rode towards the church. (Cap. v. 53.)¹

There is also a good deal said about a very questionable blind man—one Albricus (Alberich?)—who having been cured, not of his blindness, but of another disease under which he laboured, took up his quarters at Seligenstadt, and came out as a prophet, inspired by the Archangel Gabriel. Eginhard intimates that his prophecies were fulfilled; but as he does not state exactly what they were, or how they were accomplished, the statement must be accepted with much caution. It is obvious that he

¹ Eginhard speaks with lofty contempt of the "vana ac superstitiosa præsumptio" of the poor woman's companions in trying to alleviate her sufferings with "herbs and frivolous incantations." Vain enough, no doubt, but the "mulierculæ" might have returned the epithet "superstitious" with interest.

was not the man to hesitate to "ease" a prophecy until it fitted, if the credit of the shrine of his favourite saints could be increased by such a procedure. There is no impeachment of his honour in the supposition. The logic of the matter is quite simple, if somewhat sophistical. The holiness of the Church of the martyrs guarantees the reality of the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel there; and what the archangel says must be true. Therefore if anything seem to be wrong, that must be the mistake of the transmitter; and, in justice to the archangel, it must be suppressed or set right. This sort of "reconciliation" is not unknown in quite modern times, and among people who would be very much shocked to be compared with a "benighted papist" of the ninth century.

The readers of this essay are, I imagine, very largely composed of people who would be shocked to be regarded as anything but enlightened Protestants. It is not unlikely that those of them who have accompanied me thus far may be disposed to say, "Well, this is all very amusing as a story, but what is the practical interest of it? We are not likely to believe in the miracles worked by the spolia of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus, or by those of any other saints in the Roman Calendar."

The practical interest is this: if you do not believe in these miracles recounted by a witness whose character and competency are firmly established, whose sincerity cannot be doubted, and who appeals to his sovereign and other contemporaries as witnesses of the truth of what he says in a document of which a MS. copy exists, probably dating within a century of the author's death, why do you profess to believe in stories of a like character, which are found in documents of the dates and of the authorship of which nothing is certainly determined, and no known copies of which come within two or three centuries of the events they record? If it be true that the four Gospels and the Acts

were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all that we know of these persons comes to nothing in comparison with our knowledge of Eginhard; and not only is there no proof that the traditional authors of these works wrote them, but very strong reasons to the contrary may be alleged. If, therefore, you refuse to believe that "Wiggo" was cast out of the possessed girl on Eginhard's authority, with what justice can you profess to believe that the legion of devils were cast out of the man among the tombs of the Gadarenes? And if, on the other hand, you accept Eginhard's evidence, why do you laugh at the supposed efficacy of relics and the saint-worship of the modern Romanists? It cannot be pretended, in the face of all evidence, that the Jews of the year 30 A.D. or thereabouts, were less imbued with the belief in the supernatural than were the Franks of the year 800 A.D. The same influences were at work in each case, and it is only reasonable to suppose that the results were the same. If the evidence of Eginhard is insufficient to lead reasonable men to believe in the miracles he relates, *a fortiori* the evidence afforded by the Gospels and the Acts must be so.¹

But it may be said that no serious critic denies the genuineness of the four great Pauline Epistles—Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, and Romans—and that in three out of these four Paul lays claim to the power of working miracles.² Must we suppose, therefore, that the Apostle to the Gentiles has stated that which is false? But to how much does this so-called claim amount? It may mean much or little. Paul nowhere tells us what he did in this direction; and in his sore need to justify

¹ Of course there is nothing new in this argument; but it does not grow weaker by age. And the case of Eginhard is far more instructive than that of Augustine, because the former has so very frankly, though incidentally, revealed to us not only his own mental and moral habits, but those of the people about him.

² See 1 Cor. xii. 10-28; 2 Cor. vi. 12; Rom. xv. 19.

his assumption of apostleship against the sneers of his enemies, it is hardly likely that, if he had any very striking cases to bring forward, he would have neglected evidence so well calculated to put them to shame. And, without the slightest impeachment of Paul's veracity, we must further remember that his strongly-marked mental characteristics, displayed in unmistakable fashion in these Epistles, are anything but those which would justify us in regarding him as a critical witness respecting matters of fact, or as a trustworthy interpreter of their significance. When a man testifies to a miracle, he not only states a fact, but he adds an interpretation of the fact. We may admit his evidence as to the former, and yet think his opinion as to the latter worthless. If Eginhard's calm and objective narrative of the historical events of his time is no guarantee for the soundness of his judgment where the supernatural is concerned, the heated rhetoric of the Apostle of the Gentiles, his absolute confidence in the "inner light," and the extraordinary conceptions of the nature and requirements of logical proof which he betrays, in page after page of his Epistles, afford still less security.

There is a comparatively modern man who shared to the full Paul's trust in the "inner light," and who, though widely different from the fiery evangelist of Tarsus in various obvious particulars, yet, if I am not mistaken, shares his deepest characteristics. I speak of George Fox, who separated himself from the current Protestantism of England, in the seventeenth century, as Paul separated himself from the Judaism of the first century, at the bidding of the "inner light"; who went through persecutions as serious as those which Paul enumerates; who was beaten, stoned, cast out for dead, imprisoned nine times, sometimes for long periods, who was in perils on land and perils at sea. George Fox was an even more widely-travelled missionary; while his success in founding congregations, and

his energy in visiting them, not merely in Great Britain and Ireland and the West India Islands, but on the continent of Europe and that of North America, were no less remarkable. A few years after Fox began to preach, there were reckoned to be a thousand Friends in prison in the various gaols of England; at his death, less than fifty years after the foundation of the sect, there were 70,000 Quakers in the United Kingdom. The cheerfulness with which these people—women as well as men—underwent martyrdom in this country and in the New England States is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of religion.

No one who reads the voluminous autobiography of "Honest George" can doubt the man's utter truthfulness; and though, in his multitudinous letters, he but rarely rises far above the incoherent commonplaces of a street preacher, there can be no question of his power as a speaker, nor any doubt as to the dignity and attractiveness of his personality, or of his possession of a large amount of practical good sense and governing faculty.

But that George Fox had full faith in his own powers as a miracle-worker, the following passage of his autobiography (to which others might be added) demonstrates:—

Now after I was set at liberty from Nottingham gaol (where I had been kept a prisoner a pretty long time) I travelled as before, in the work of the Lord. And coming to Mansfield Woodhouse, there was a distracted woman, under a doctor's hand, with her hair let loose all about her ears; and he was about to let her blood, she being first bound, and many people being about her, holding her by violence; but he could get no blood from her. And I desired them to unbind her and let her alone; for they could not touch the spirit in her by which she was tormented. So they did unbind her, and I was moved to speak to her, and in the name of the Lord to bid her be quiet and still. And she was so. And the Lord's power settled her mind and she mended; and afterwards received the truth and continued in it to her death. And the Lord's name was honoured; to whom the glory of all His works belongs. Many great and wonderful things were wrought by the heavenly power in those days. For the Lord made bare His omnipotent arm and manifested

His power to the astonishment of many ; by the healing virtue whereof many have been delivered from great infirmities, and the devils were made subject through His name : of which particular instances might be given beyond what this unbelieving age is able to receive or bear.¹

It needs no long study of Fox's writings, however, to arrive at the conviction that the distinction between subjective and objective verities had not the same place in his mind as it has in that of an ordinary mortal. When an ordinary person would say "I thought so and so," or "I made up my mind to do so and so," George Fox says, "It was opened to me," or "at the command of God I did so and so." "Then at the command of God on the ninth day of the seventh month 1643 (Fox being just nineteen), I left my relations and brake off all familiarity or friendship with young or old." "About the beginning of the year 1647 I was moved of the Lord to go into Darbyshire." Fox hears voices and he sees visions, some of which he brings before the reader with apocalyptic power in the simple and strong English, alike untutored and undefiled, of which, like John Bunyan, his contemporary, he was a master.

"And one morning, as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me and a temptation beset me ; and I sate still. And it was said, *All things come*

¹ *A Journal or Historical Account of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Christian Experiences, &c., of George Fox.* Ed. 1694, pp. 27, 28.

by Nature. And the elements and stars came over me ; so that I was in a manner quite clouded with it. . . . And as I sate still under it, and let it alone, a living hope arose in me and a true voice arose in me which said, *There is a living God who made all things.* And immediately the cloud and the temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all, and my heart was glad and I praised the living God" (p. 13).

If George Fox could speak, as he proves in this and some other passages he could write, his astounding influence on the contemporaries of Milton and of Cromwell is no mystery. But this modern reproduction of the ancient prophet, with his "Thus saith the Lord," "This is the work of the Lord," steeped in supernaturalism and glorying in blind faith, is the mental antipodes of the philosopher, founded in naturalism and a fanatic for evidence, to whom these affirmations inevitably suggest the previous question : "How do you know that the Lord saith it?" "How do you know that the Lord doeth it?" and who is compelled to demand that rational ground for belief, without which, to the man of science, assent is merely an immoral pretence.

And it is this rational ground of belief which the writers of the Gospels, no less than Paul, and Eginhard, and Fox, so little dream of offering that they would regard the demand for it as a kind of blasphemy.

AGNOSTICISM

[1889]

WITHIN the last few months [1889] the public has received much and varied information on the subject of Agnostics, their tenets, and even their future. Agnosticism exercised the orators of the Church Congress at Manchester.¹ It has been furnished with a set of "articles," fewer, but not less rigid, and certainly not less consistent than the thirty-nine; its nature has been analysed, and its future severely predicted by the most eloquent of that prophetic school whose Samuel is Auguste Comte. It may still be a question, however, whether the public is as much the wiser as might be expected, considering all the trouble that has been taken to enlighten it. Not only are the three accounts of the agnostic position sadly out of harmony with one another, but I propose to show cause for my belief that all three must be seriously questioned by any one who employs the term "agnostic" in the sense in which it was originally used. The learned Principal of King's College, who brought the topic of Agnosticism before the Church Congress, took a short and easy way of settling the business:—

But if this be so, for a man to urge, as an escape from this article of belief, that he has no means of a scientific knowledge of the unseen world, or of the future, is irrelevant. His difference from Christians lies not in the fact that he has no knowledge of these things, but that he does not believe the authority on which they are stated. He may prefer to call himself an agnostic; but his real name is an older one—he is an infidel; that is to say, an unbeliever. The word infidel, perhaps, carries an unpleasant significance. Perhaps it is right that it should. It is, and it ought to be, an unpleasant thing

for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe in Jesus Christ.¹

So much of Dr. Wace's address either explicitly or implicitly concerns me, that I take upon myself to deal with it; but, in doing so, it must be understood that I speak for myself alone. I am not aware that there is any sect of Agnostics; and if there be, I am not its acknowledged prophet or pope. I desire to leave to the Comtists the entire monopoly of the manufacture of imitation ecclesiasticism.

Let us calmly and dispassionately consider Dr. Wace's appreciation of agnosticism. The agnostic, according to his view, is a person who says he has no means of attaining a scientific knowledge of the unseen world or of the future; by which somewhat loose phraseology Dr. Wace presumably means the theological unseen world and future. I cannot think this description happy, either in form or substance; but for the present it may pass. Dr. Wace continues that is not "his difference from Christians." Are there then any Christians who say that they know nothing about the unseen world and the future? I was ignorant of the fact, but I am ready to accept it on the authority of a professional theologian, and I proceed to Dr. Wace's next proposition.

¹ [In this place and in *Illustrations of Mr. Gladstone's Controversial Methods*, there are references to the late Archbishop of York which are of no importance to my main argument, and which I have expunged because I desire to obliterate the traces of a temporary misunderstanding with a man of rare ability, candour, and wit, for whom I entertained a great liking and no less respect. I rejoice to think now of the (then) Bishop's cordial hail the first time we met after our little skirmish, "Well, is it to be peace or war?" I replied, "A little of both." But there was only peace when we parted, and ever after.]

¹ See the *Official Report of the Church Congress held at Manchester*, October 1888, pp. 253, 254.

The real state of the case, then, is that the agnostic "does not believe the authority" on which "these things" are stated, which authority is Jesus Christ. He is simply an old-fashioned "infidel" who is afraid to own to his right name. As "presbyter is priest writ large," so is "agnostic" the mere Greek equivalent for the Latin "infidel." There is an attractive simplicity about this solution of the problem; and it has that advantage of being somewhat offensive to the persons attacked, which is so dear to the less refined sort of controversialist. The agnostic says, "I cannot find good evidence that so and so is true." "Ah," says his adversary, seizing his opportunity, "then you declare that Jesus Christ was untruthful, for he said so and so;" a very telling method of rousing prejudice. But suppose that the value of the evidence as to what Jesus may have said and done, and as to the exact nature and scope of his authority, is just that which the agnostic finds it most difficult to determine. If I venture to doubt that the Duke of Wellington gave the command "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" at Waterloo, I do not think that even Dr. Wace would accuse me of disbelieving the Duke. Yet it would be just as reasonable to do this as to accuse any one of denying what Jesus said, before the preliminary question as to what he did say is settled.

Now, the question as to what Jesus really said and did is strictly a scientific problem, which is capable of solution by no other methods than those practised by the historian and the literary critic. It is a problem of immense difficulty, which has occupied some of the best heads in Europe for the last century; and it is only of late years that their investigations have begun to converge towards one conclusion.¹

¹ Dr. Wace tells us, "It may be asked how far we can rely on the accounts we possess of our Lord's teaching on these subjects." And he seems to think the question appropriately answered by the assertion that it "ought to be regarded as settled by M. Renan's practical surrender of the adverse case." I thought I knew

That kind of faith which Dr. Wace describes and lauds is of no use here. Indeed, he himself takes pains to destroy its evidential value.

"What made the Mahommedan world? Trust and faith in the declarations and assurances of Mahommed. And what made the Christian world? Trust and faith in the declarations and assurances of Jesus Christ and His Apostles" (*l.c.* p. 253). The triumphant tone of this imaginary catechism leads me to suspect that its author has hardly appreciated its full import. Presumably, Dr. Wace regards Mahommed as an unbeliever, or, to use the term which he prefers, infidel; and considers that his assurances have given rise to a vast delusion which has led, and is leading, millions of men straight to everlasting punishment. And this being so, the "Trust and faith" which have "made the Mahommedan world," in just the same sense as they have "made the Christian world," must be trust and faith in falsehood. No man who has studied history, or even attended to the occurrences of everyday life, can doubt the enormous practical value of trust and faith; but as little will he be inclined to deny that this practical value has not the least relation to the reality of the objects of that trust and faith. In examples of patient constancy of faith and of unswerving trust, the "Acta Martyrum" do not excel the annals of Babism.¹

M. Renan's works pretty well, but I have contrived to miss this "practical" (I wish Dr. Wace had defined the scope of that useful adjective) surrender. However, as Dr. Wace can find no difficulty in pointing out the passage of M. Renan's writings, by which he feels justified in making his statement, I shall wait for further enlightenment, contenting myself, for the present, with remarking that if M. Renan were to retract and do penance in Notre-Dame to-morrow for any contributions to Biblical criticism that may be specially his property, the main results of that criticism, as they are set forth in the works of Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and Volkmar, for example, could not be sensibly affected.

¹ [See De Gobineau, *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*; and the recently published work of Mr. E. G. Browne, *The Episode of the Bab.*]

The discussion upon which we have now entered goes so thoroughly to the root of the whole matter; the question of the day is so completely, as the author of "Robert Elsmere" says, the value of testimony, that I shall offer no apology for following it out somewhat in detail; and, by way of giving substance to the argument, I shall base what I have to say upon a case, the consideration of which lies strictly within the province of natural science, and of that particular part of it known as the physiology and pathology of the nervous system.

I find, in the second Gospel (chap. v.), a statement, to all appearance intended to have the same evidential value as any other contained in that history. It is the well-known story of the devils who were cast out of a man, and ordered, or permitted, to enter into a herd of swine, to the great loss and damage of the innocent Gerasene, or Gadarene, pig owners. There can be no doubt that the narrator intends to convey to his readers his own conviction that this casting out and entering in were effected by the agency of Jesus of Nazareth; that, by speech and action, Jesus enforced this conviction; nor does any inkling of the legal and moral difficulties of the case manifest itself.

On the other hand, everything that I know of physiological and pathological science leads me to entertain a very strong conviction that the phenomena ascribed to possession are as purely natural as those which constitute small-pox; everything that I know of anthropology leads me to think that the belief in demons and demoniacal possession is a mere survival of a once universal superstition, and that its persistence, at the present time, is pretty much in the inverse ratio of the general instruction, intelligence, and sound judgment of the population among whom it prevails. Everything that I know of law and justice convinces me that the wanton destruction of other people's property is a misdemeanour of evil example. Again, the study of history, and especially of that of

the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, leaves no shadow of doubt on my mind that the belief in the reality of possession and of witchcraft, justly based, alike by Catholics and Protestants, upon this and innumerable other passages in both the Old and New Testaments, gave rise, through the special influence of Christian ecclesiastics, to the most horrible persecutions and judicial murders of thousands upon thousands of innocent men, women, and children. And when I reflect that the record of a plain and simple declaration upon such an occasion as this, that the belief in witchcraft and possession is wicked nonsense, would have rendered the long agony of mediæval humanity impossible, I am prompted to reject, as dishonouring, the supposition that such declaration was withheld out of condescension to popular error.

"Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man" (Mark v. 8)¹ are the words attributed to Jesus. If I declare, as I have no hesitation in doing, that I utterly disbelieve in the existence of "unclean spirits," and, consequently, in the possibility of their "coming forth" out of a man, I suppose that Dr. Wace will tell me I am disregarding the testimony "of our Lord." For, if these words were really used, the most resourceful of reconcilers can hardly venture to affirm that they are compatible with a disbelief "in these things." As the learned and fair-minded, as well as orthodox, Dr. Alexander remarks, in an editorial note to the article "Demoniacs," in the "Biblical Cyclopædia" (vol. i. p. 664, note):—

... On the lowest grounds on which our Lord and His Apostles can be placed they must, at least, be regarded as *honest* men. Now, though honest speech does not require that words should be used always and only in their etymological sense, it does require that they should not be used so as to affirm what the speaker knows to be false. Whilst, therefore, our Lord and His Apostles might use the the word *δαιμονίζεσθαι*, or the phrase, *δαιμόνιον ἔχειν*, as a popular

¹ Here, as always, the revised version is cited.

description of certain diseases, without giving in to the belief which lay at the source of such a mode of expression, they could not speak of demons entering into a man, or being cast out of him, without pledging themselves to the belief of an actual possession of the man by the demons. (Campbell, *Prel. Diss.* vi. 1, 10.) If, consequently, they did not hold this belief, they spoke not as honest men.

The story which we are considering does not rest on the authority of the second Gospel alone. The third confirms the second, especially in the matter of commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man (Luke viii. 29); and, although the first Gospel either gives a different version of the same story, or tells another of like kind, the essential point remains: "If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And He said unto them: Go!" (Matt. viii. 31, 32).

If the concurrent testimony of the three synoptics, then, is really sufficient to do away with all rational doubt as to the matter of fact of the utmost practical and speculative importance—belief or disbelief in which may affect, and has affected, men's lives and their conduct towards other men, in the most serious way—then I am bound to believe that Jesus implicitly affirmed himself to possess a "knowledge of the unseen world," which afforded full confirmation of the belief in demons and possession current among his contemporaries. If the story is true, the mediæval theory of the invisible world may be, and probably is, quite correct; and the witch-finders, from Sprenger to Hopkins and Mather, are much-maligned men.

On the other hand, humanity, noting the frightful consequences of this belief; commonsense, observing the futility of the evidence on which it is based, in all cases that have been properly investigated; science, more and more seeing its way to inclose all the phenomena of so-called "possession" within the domain of pathology, so far as they are not to be relegated to that of the police—all these powerful influences concur in warning us, at our peril, against accepting

the belief without the most careful scrutiny of the authority on which it rests.

I can discern no escape from this dilemma: either Jesus said what he is reported to have said, or he did not. In the former case, it is inevitable that his authority on matters connected with the "unseen world" should be roughly shaken; in the latter, the blow falls upon the authority of the synoptic Gospels. If their report on a matter of such stupendous and far-reaching practical import—as this is untrustworthy, how can we be sure of its trustworthiness in other cases? The favourite "earth" in which the hard-pressed reconciler takes refuge, that the Bible does not profess to teach science,¹ is stopped in this instance. For the question of the existence of demons and of possession by them, though it lies strictly within the province of science, is also of the deepest moral and religious significance. If physical and mental disorders are caused by demons, Gregory of Tours and his contemporaries rightly considered that relics and exorcists were more useful than doctors; the gravest questions arise as to the legal and moral responsibilities of persons inspired by demoniacal impulses; and our whole conception of the universe and of our relations to it becomes totally different from what it would be on the contrary hypothesis.

¹ Does any one really mean to say that there is any internal or external criterion by which the reader of a biblical statement, in which scientific matter is contained, is enabled to judge whether it is to be taken *au sérieux* or not? Is the account of the Deluge, accepted as true in the New Testament, less precise and specific than that of the call of Abraham, also accepted as true therein? By what mark does the story of the feeding with manna in the wilderness, which involves some very curious scientific problems, show that it is meant merely for edification, while the story of the inscription of the Law on stone by the hand of Jahveh is literally true? If the story of the Fall is not the true record of an historical occurrence, what becomes of Pauline theology? Yet the story of the Fall as directly conflicts with probability, and is as devoid of trustworthy evidence, as that of the Creation or that of the Deluge, with which it forms an harmoniously legendary series.

The theory of life of an average mediæval Christian was as different from that of an average nineteenth-century Englishman as that of a West African negro is now, in these respects. The modern world is slowly, but surely, shaking off these and other monstrous survivals of savage delusions; and, whatever happens, it will not return to that wallowing in the mire. Until the contrary is proved, I venture to doubt whether, at this present moment, any Protestant theologian, who has a reputation to lose, will say that he believes the Gadarene story.

The choice then lies between discrediting those who compiled the Gospel biographies and disbelieving the Master, whom they, simple souls, thought to honour by preserving such traditions of the exercise of his authority over Satan's invisible world. This is the dilemma. No deep scholarship, nothing but a knowledge of the revised version (on which it is to be supposed all that mere scholarship can do has been done), with the application thereto of the commonest canons of common sense, is needful to enable us to make a choice between its alternatives. It is hardly doubtful that the story, as told in the first Gospel, is merely a version of that told in the second and third. Nevertheless, the discrepancies are serious and irreconcilable; and, on this ground alone, a suspension of judgment at the least, is called for. But there is a great deal more to be said. From the dawn of scientific biblical criticism until the present day, the evidence against the long-cherished notion that the three synoptic Gospels are the works of three independent authors, each prompted by Divine inspiration, has steadily accumulated, until at the present time there is no visible escape from the conclusion that each of the three is a compilation consisting of a groundwork common to all three—the threefold tradition; and of a superstructure, consisting, firstly, of matter common to it with one of the others, and, secondly, of matter special to each. The use of the terms "groundwork" and "superstructure" by no

means implies that the latter must be of later date than the former. On the contrary, some parts of it may be, and probably are, older than some parts of the groundwork.¹

The story of the Gadarene swine belongs to the groundwork; at least, the essential part of it, in which the belief in demoniac possession is expressed, does; and therefore the compilers of the first, second, and third Gospels, whoever they were, certainly accepted that belief (which, indeed, was universal among both Jews and pagans at that time), and attributed it to Jesus.

What, then, do we know about the originator, or originators, of this groundwork—of that three-fold tradition which all three witnesses (in Paley's phrase) agree upon—that we should allow their mere statements to outweigh the counter arguments of humanity, of common sense, of exact science, and to imperil the respect which all would be glad to be able to render to their Master?

Absolutely nothing.² There is no proof, nothing more than a fair presumption, that any one of the Gospels existed, in the state in which we find it in the authorised version of the Bible, before the second century, or in other words, sixty or seventy years after the events recorded. And between that time and the date of the oldest extant manuscripts, of the Gospels, there is no telling what additions and alterations and interpolations may have been made. It may be said that this is all mere speculation, but it is a good deal more. As

¹ See, for an admirable discussion of the whole subject, Dr. Abbott's article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and the remarkable monograph by Professor Volkmar, *Jesus Nazarenus und die erste christliche Zeit* (1882). Whether we agree with the conclusions of these writers or not, the method of critical investigation which they adopt is unimpeachable.

² Notwithstanding the hard words shot at me from behind the hedge of anonymity by a writer in a recent number of the *Quarterly Review*, I repeat, without the slightest fear of refutation, that the four Gospels, as they have come to us, are the work of unknown writers.

competent scholars and honest men, our revisers have felt compelled to point out that such things have happened even since the date of the oldest known manuscripts. The oldest two copies of the second Gospel end with the 8th verse of the 16th chapter; the remaining twelve verses are spurious, and it is noteworthy that the maker of the addition has not hesitated to introduce a speech in which Jesus promises his disciples that "in My name shall they cast out devils."

The other passage "rejected to the margin" is still more instructive. It is that touching apologue, with its profound ethical sense, of the woman taken in adultery—which, if internal evidence were an infallible guide, might well be affirmed to be a typical example of the teachings of Jesus. Yet, say the revisers, pitilessly, "Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53–viii. 11." Now let any reasonable man ask himself this question: If, after an approximate settlement of the canon of the New Testament, and even later than the fourth and fifth centuries, literary fabricators had the skill and the audacity to make such additions and interpolations as these, what may they have done when no one had thought of a canon; when oral tradition, still unfixed, was regarded as more valuable than such written records as may have existed in the latter portion of the first century? Or, to take the other alternative, if those who gradually settled the canon did not know of the existence of the oldest codices which have come down to us; or if, knowing them, they rejected their authority, what is to be thought of their competency as critics of the text?

People who object to free criticism of the Christian Scriptures forget that they are what they are in virtue of very free criticism; unless the advocates of inspiration are prepared to affirm that the majority of influential ecclesiastics during several centuries were safeguarded against error. For, even granting that some books of the period were inspired, they were certainly few amongst many, and those who selected the canonical

books, unless they themselves were also inspired, must be regarded in the light of mere critics, and, from the evidence they have left of their intellectual habits, very uncritical critics. When one thinks that such delicate questions as those involved fell into the hands of men like Papias (who believed in the famous millenarian grape story); of Irenæus with his "reasons" for the existence of only four Gospels; and of such calm and dispassionate judges as Tertullian, with his "Credo quia impossibile": the marvel is that the selection which constitutes our New Testament is as free as it is from obviously objectionable matter. The apocryphal Gospels certainly deserve to be apocryphal; but one may suspect that a little more critical discrimination would have enlarged the Apocrypha not inconsiderably.

At this point a very obvious objection arises and deserves full and candid consideration. It may be said that critical scepticism carried to the length suggested is historical pyrrhonism; that if we are altogether to discredit an ancient or a modern historian, because he has assumed fabulous matter to be true, it will be as well to give up paying any attention to history. It may be said, and with great justice, that Eginhard's "Life of Charlemagne" is none the less trustworthy because of the astounding revelation of credulity, of lack of judgment, and even of respect for the eighth commandment, which he has unconsciously made in the "History of the Translation of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Paul." Or, to go no further back than the last number of the *Nineteenth Century*, surely that excellent lady, Miss Strickland, is not to be refused all credence, because of the myth about the second James's remains, which she seems to have unconsciously invented.

Of course this is perfectly true. I am afraid there is no man alive whose witness could be accepted, if the condition precedent were proof that he had never invented and promulgated a myth. In the minds of all of us there are little

places here and there, like the indistinguishable spots on a rock which give foothold to moss or stonecrop ; on which, if the germ of a myth fall, it is certain to grow, without in the least degree affecting our accuracy or truthfulness elsewhere. Sir Walter Scott knew that he could not repeat a story without, as he said, "giving it a new hat and stick." Most of us differ from Sir Walter only in not knowing about this tendency of the mythopœic faculty to break out unnoticed. But it is also perfectly true that the mythopœic faculty is not equally active in all minds, nor in all regions and under all conditions of the same mind. David Hume was certainly not so liable to temptation as the Venerable Bede, or even as some recent historians who could be mentioned ; and the most imaginative of debtors, if he owes five pounds, never makes an obligation to pay a hundred out of it. The rule of common sense is *prima facie* to trust a witness in all matters, in which neither his self-interest, his passions, his prejudices, nor that love of the marvellous, which is inherent to a greater or less degree in all mankind, are strongly concerned ; and, when they are involved, to require corroborative evidence in exact proportion to the contravention of probability by the thing testified.

Now, in the Gadarene affair, I do not think I am unreasonably sceptical, if I say that the existence of demons who can be transferred from a man to a pig, does thus contravene probability. Let me be perfectly candid. I admit I have no *a priori* objection to offer. There are physical things, such as *tæniæ* and *trichinæ*, which can be transferred from men to pigs, and *vice versa*, and which do undoubtedly produce most diabolical and deadly effects on both. For anything I can absolutely prove to the contrary, there may be spiritual things capable of the same transmigration, with like effects. Moreover I am bound to add that perfectly truthful persons, for whom I have the greatest respect, believe in stories about spirits of the present

day, quite as improbable as that we are considering.

So I declare, as plainly as I can, that I am unable to show cause why these transferable devils should not exist ; nor can I deny that, not merely the whole Roman Church, but many Wacean "infidels" of no mean repute, do honestly and firmly believe that the activity of such like demonic beings is in full swing in this year of grace 1889.

Nevertheless, as good Bishop Butler says, "probability is the guide of life" ; and it seems to me that this is just one of the cases in which the canon of credibility and testimony, which I have ventured to lay down, has full force. So that, with the most entire respect for many (by no means for all) of our witnesses for the truth of demonology, ancient and modern, I conceive their evidence on this particular matter to be ridiculously insufficient to warrant their conclusion.¹

After what has been said, I do not think that any sensible man, unless he happen to be angry, will accuse me of "contradicting the Lord and His Apostles" if I reiterate my total disbelief in the whole Gadarene story. But, if that story is discredited, all the other stories of demoniac possession fall under suspicion. And if the belief in demons and demoniac possession, which forms

¹ Their arguments, in the long run, are always reducible to one form. Otherwise trustworthy witnesses affirm that such and such events took place. These events are inexplicable, except the agency of "spirits" is admitted. Therefore "spirits" were the cause of the phenomena.

And the heads of the reply are always the same. Remember Goethe's aphorism : "Alles factische ist schon Theorie." Trustworthy witnesses are constantly deceived, or deceive themselves, in their interpretation of sensible phenomena. No one can prove that the sensible phenomena, in these cases, could be caused only by the agency of spirits : and there is abundant ground for believing that they may be produced in other ways. Therefore, the utmost that can be reasonably asked for, on the evidence as it stands, is suspension of judgment. And, on the necessity for even that suspension, reasonable men may differ, according to their views of probability.

the sombre background of the whole picture of primitive Christianity, presented to us in the New Testament, is shaken, what is to be said, in any case, of the uncorroborated testimony of the Gospels with respect to "the unseen world"?

I am not aware that I have been influenced by any more bias in regard to the Gadarene story than I have been in dealing with other cases of like kind the investigation of which has interested me. I was brought up in the strictest school of evangelical orthodoxy; and when I was old enough to think for myself I started upon my journey of inquiry with little doubt about the general truth of what I had been taught; and with that feeling of the unpleasantness of being called an "infidel" which, we are told, is so right and proper. Near my journey's end, I find myself in a condition of something more than mere doubt about these matters.

In the course of other inquiries, I have had to do with fossil remains which looked quite plain at a distance, and became more and more indistinct as I tried to define their outline by close inspection. There was something there—something which, if I could win assurance about it, might mark a new epoch in the history of the earth; but, study as long as I might, certainty eluded my grasp. So has it been with me in my efforts to define the grand figure of Jesus as it lies in the primary strata of Christian literature. Is he the kindly, peaceful Christ depicted in the Catacombs? Or is he the stern Judge who frowns above the altar of SS. Cosmas and Damianus? Or can he be rightly represented by the bleeding ascetic, broken down by physical pain, of too many mediæval pictures? Are we to accept the Jesus of the second, or the Jesus of the fourth Gospel, as the true Jesus? What did he really say and do; and how much that is attributed to him, in speech and action, is the embroidery of the various parties into which his followers tended to split themselves

within twenty years of his death, when even the threefold tradition was only nascent?

If any one will answer these questions for me with something more to the point than feeble talk about the "cowardice of agnosticism," I shall be deeply his debtor. Unless and until they are satisfactorily answered, I say of agnosticism in this matter, "*J'y suis, et j'y reste.*"

But, as we have seen, it is asserted that I have no business to call myself an agnostic; that, if I am not a Christian I am an infidel; and that I ought to call myself by that name of "unpleasant significance." Well, I do not care much what I am called by other people, and if I had at my side all those who, since the Christian era, have been called infidels by other folks, I could not desire better company. If these are my ancestors, I prefer, with the old Frank, to be with them wherever they are. But there are several points in Dr. Wace's contention which must be elucidated before I can even think of undertaking to carry out his wishes. I must, for instance, know what a Christian is. Now what is a Christian? By whose authority is the signification of that term defined? Is there any doubt that the immediate followers of Jesus, the "sect of the Nazarenes," were strictly orthodox Jews differing from other Jews not more than the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes differed from one another; in fact, only in the belief that the Messiah, for whom the rest of their nation waited, had come? Was not their chief, "James, the brother of the Lord," revered alike by Sadducee, Pharisee, and Nazarene? At the famous conference which, according to the Acts, took place at Jerusalem, does not James declare that "myriads" of Jews, who, by that time, had become Nazarenes, were "all zealous for the Law"? Was not the name of "Christian" first used to denote the converts to the doctrine promulgated by Paul and Barnabas at Antioch? Does the subsequent history of Christianity leave any doubt that,

from this time forth, the "little rift within the lute" caused by the new teaching, developed, if not inaugurated, at Antioch, grew wider and wider, until the two types of doctrine irreconcilably diverged? Did not the primitive Nazarenism, or Ebionism, develop into the Nazarenism, and Ebionism, and Elkasaitism of later ages, and finally die out in obscurity and condemnation, as damnable heresy; while the younger doctrine thrived and pushed out its shoots into that endless variety of sects, of which the three strongest survivors are the Roman and Greek Churches and modern Protestantism?

Singular state of things! If I were to profess the doctrine which was held by "James, the brother of the Lord," and by every one of the "myriads" of his followers and co-religionists in Jerusalem up to twenty or thirty years after the Crucifixion (and one knows not how much later at Pella), I should be condemned with unanimity, as an ebionising heretic by the Roman, Greek, and Protestant Churches! And, probably, this hearty and unanimous condemnation of the creed, held by those who were in the closest personal relation with their Lord, is almost the only point upon which they would be cordially of one mind. On the other hand, though I hardly dare imagine such a thing, I very much fear that the "pillars" of the primitive Hierosolymitan Church would have considered Dr. Wace an infidel. No one can read the famous second chapter of Galatians and the book of Revelation without seeing how narrow was even Paul's escape from a similar fate. And, if ecclesiastical history is to be trusted, the thirty-nine articles, be they right or wrong, diverge from the primitive doctrine of the Nazarenes vastly more than even Pauline Christianity did.

But, further than this, I have great difficulty in assuring myself that even James, "the brother of the Lord," and his "myriads" of Nazarenes, properly represented the doctrines of their Master. For it is constantly asserted by our

modern "pillars" that one of the chief features of the work of Jesus was the instauration of Religion by the abolition of what our sticklers for articles and liturgies, with unconscious humour, call the narrow restrictions of the Law. Yet, if James knew this, how could the bitter controversy with Paul have arisen; and why did not one or the other side quote any of the various sayings of Jesus, recorded in the Gospels, which directly bear on the question—sometimes, apparently, in opposite directions.

So, if I am asked to call myself an "infidel," I reply: To what doctrine do you ask me to be faithful? Is it that contained in the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds? My firm belief is that the Nazarenes, say of the year 40, headed by James, would have stopped their ears and thought worthy of stoning the audacious man who propounded it to them. Is it contained in the so-called Apostles' Creed! I am pretty sure that even that would have created a recalcitrant commotion at Pella in the year 70, among the Nazarenes of Jerusalem, who had fled from the soldiers of Titus. And yet, if the unadulterated tradition of the teachings of "the Nazarene" were to be found anywhere, it surely should have been amidst those not very aged disciples who may have heard them as they were delivered.

Therefore, however sorry I may be to be unable to demonstrate that, if necessary, I should not be afraid to call myself an "infidel," I cannot do it. "Infidel" is a term of reproach, which Christians and Mahomedans, in their modesty, agree to apply to those who differ from them. If he had only thought of it, Dr. Wace might have used the term "miscreant," which, with the same etymological signification, has the advantage of being still more "unpleasant" to the persons to whom it is applied. But why should a man be expected to call himself a "miscreant" or an "infidel"? That St. Patrick "had two birthdays because he was a twin" is a reasonable and intelligible

utterance beside that of the man who should declare himself to be an infidel, on the ground of denying his own belief. It may be logically, if not ethically, defensible that a Christian should call a Mahommedan an infidel and *vice versa*; but, on Dr. Wace's principles, both ought to call themselves infidels, because each applies the term to the other.

Now I am afraid that all the Mahommedan world would agree in reciprocating that appellation to Dr. Wace himself. I once visited the Hazar Mosque, the great University of Mahommedanism, in Cairo, in ignorance of the fact that I was unprovided with proper authority. A swarm of angry undergraduates, as I suppose I ought to call them, came buzzing about me and my guide; and if I had known Arabic, I suspect that "dog of an infidel" would have been by no means the most "unpleasant" of the epithets showered upon me, before I could explain and apologise for the mistake. If I had had the pleasure of Dr. Wace's company on that occasion, the indiscriminate followers of the Prophet would, I am afraid, have made no difference between us; not even if they had known that he was the head of an orthodox Christian seminary. And I have not the smallest doubt that even one of the learned mollahs, if his grave courtesy would have permitted him to say anything offensive to men of another mode of belief, would have told us that he wondered we did not find it "very unpleasant" to disbelieve in the Prophet of Islam.

From what precedes, I think it becomes sufficiently clear that Dr. Wace's account of the origin of the name of "Agnostic" is quite wrong. Indeed, I am bound to add that very slight effort to discover the truth would have convinced him that, as a matter of fact, the term arose otherwise. I am loath to go over an old story once more; but more than one object which I have in view will be served by telling it a little more fully than it has yet been told.

Looking back nearly fifty years, I see

myself as a boy, whose education has been interrupted, and who intellectually was left, for some years, altogether to his own devices. At that time I was a voracious and omnivorous reader; a dreamer and speculator of the first water, well endowed with that splendid courage in attacking any and every subject, which is the blessed compensation of youth and inexperience. Among the books and essays, on all sorts of topics from metaphysics to heraldry, which I read at this time, two left indelible impressions on my mind. One was Guizot's "History of Civilisation," the other was Sir William Hamilton's essay "On the Philosophy of the Unconditioned," which I came upon, by chance, in an odd volume of the *Edinburgh Review*. The latter was certainly strange reading for a boy, and I could not possibly have understood a great deal of it;¹ nevertheless I devoured it with avidity, and it stamped upon my mind the strong conviction that, on even the most solemn and important of questions, men are apt to take cunning phrases for answers; and that the limitation of our faculties, in a great number of cases, renders real answers to such questions, not merely actually impossible, but theoretically inconceivable.

Philosophy and history having laid hold of me in this eccentric fashion, have never loosened their grip. I have no pretension to be an expert in either subject; but the turn for philosophical and historical reading, which rendered Hamilton and Guizot attractive to me, has not only filled many lawful leisure hours, and still more sleepless ones, with the repose of changed mental occupation, but has not unfrequently disputed my proper work-time with my liege lady, Natural Science. In this way I have found it possible to cover a good deal of ground in the territory of

* Yet I must somehow have laid hold of the pith of the matter, for, many years afterwards, when Dean Mansel's Bampton Lectures were published, it seemed to me I already knew all that this eminently agnostic thinker had to tell me.

philosophy; and all the more easily that I have never cared much about A's or B's opinions, but have rather sought to know what answer he had to give to the questions I had to put to him—that of the limitation of possible knowledge being the chief. The ordinary examiner, with his “State the views of So-and-so,” would have floored me at any time. If he had said what do *you* think about any given problem, I might have got on fairly well.

The reader who has had the patience to follow the enforced, but unwilling, egotism of this veritable history (especially if his studies have led him in the same direction), will now see why my mind steadily gravitated towards the conclusions of Hume and Kant, so well stated by the latter in a sentence, which I have quoted elsewhere.

“The greatest and perhaps the sole use of all philosophy of pure reason is, after all, merely negative, since it serves not as an organon for the enlargement [of knowledge], but as a discipline for its delimitation; and, instead of discovering truth, has only the modest merit of preventing error.”¹

When I reached intellectual maturity and began to ask myself whether I was an atheist, a theist, or a pantheist; a materialist or an idealist; a Christian or a freethinker; I found that the more I learned and reflected, the less ready was the answer; until, at last, I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with any of these denominations, except the last. The one thing in which most of these good people were agreed was the one thing in which I differed from them. They were quite sure they had attained a certain “gnosis,”—had, more or less successfully, solved the problem of existence; while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble. And, with Hume and Kant on my side, I could not think myself presumptuous

in holding fast by that opinion. Like Dante,

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,

but, unlike Dante, I cannot add,

Che la diritta via era smarrita.

On the contrary, I had, and have, the firmest conviction that I never left the “verace via”—the straight road; and that this road led nowhere else but into the dark depths of a wild and tangled forest. And though I have found leopards and lions in the path; though I have made abundant acquaintance with the hungry wolf, that “with privy paw devours apace and nothing said,” as another great poet says of the ravaging beast; and though no friendly spectre has even yet offered his guidance, I was, and am, minded to go straight on, until I either come out on the other side of the wood, or find there is no other side to it, at least, none attainable by me.

This was my situation when I had the good fortune to find a place among the members of that remarkable confraternity of antagonists, long since deceased, but of green and pious memory, the Metaphysical Society. Every variety of philosophical and theological opinion was represented there, and expressed itself with entire openness; most of my colleagues were *-ists* of one sort or another; and, however kind and friendly they might be, I, the man without a rag of a label to cover himself with, could not fail to have some of the uneasy feelings which must have beset the historical fox when, after leaving the trap in which his tail remained, he presented himself to his normally elongated companions. So I took thought, and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of “agnostic.” It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the “gnostic” of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant; and I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our Society, to show that I, too, had a tail, like the other foxes. To my great satisfaction, the

¹ *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Edit. Hartenstein, p. 256.

term took ; and when the *Spectator* had stood godfather to it, any suspicion in the minds of respectable people that a knowledge of its parentage might have awakened was, of course, completely lulled.

That is the history of the origin of the terms "agnostic" and "agnosticism" ; and it will be observed that it does not quite agree with the confident assertion of the reverend Principal of King's College, that "the adoption of the term agnostic is only an attempt to shift the issue, and that it involves a mere evasion" in relation to the Church and Christianity.¹

The last objection (I rejoice as much as my readers must do, that it is the last) which I have to take to Dr. Wace's deliverance before the Church Congress arises, I am sorry to say, on a question of morality.

"It is, and it ought to be," authoritatively declares this official representative of Christian ethics, "an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe in Jesus Christ" (*l.c.* p. 254).

Whether it is so depends, I imagine, a good deal on whether the man was brought up in a Christian household or not. I do not see why it should be "unpleasant" for a Mahomedan or Buddhist to say so. But that "it ought to be" unpleasant for any man to say anything which he sincerely, and after due deliberation, believes, is, to my mind, a proposition of the most profoundly immoral character. I verily believe that the great good which has been effected in the world by Christianity has been largely counteracted by the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed a sin of the deepest dye, deserving and involving the same future retribution as murder and robbery. If we could only see, in one view, the torrents of

hypocrisy and cruelty, the lies, the slaughter, the violations of every obligation of humanity, which have flowed from this source along the course of the history of Christian nations, our worst imaginations of Hell would pale beside the vision.

A thousand times, no ! It ought *not* to be unpleasant to say that which one honestly believes or disbelieves. That it so constantly is painful to do so, is quite enough obstacle to the progress of mankind in that most valuable of all qualities, honesty of word or of deed, without erecting a sad concomitant of human weakness into something to be admired and cherished. The bravest of soldiers often, and very naturally, "feel it unpleasant" to go into action ; but a court-martial which did its duty would make short work of the officer who promulgated the doctrine that his men *ought* to feel their duty unpleasant.

I am very well aware, as I suppose most thoughtful people are in these times, that the process of breaking away from old beliefs is extremely unpleasant ; and I am much disposed to think that the encouragement, the consolation, and the peace afforded to earnest believers in even the worst forms of Christianity are of great practical advantage to them. What deductions must be made from this gain on the score of the harm done to the citizen by the ascetic other-worldliness of logical Christianity ; to the ruler, by the hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness of sectarian bigotry ; to the legislator, by the spirit of exclusiveness and domination of those that count themselves pillars of orthodoxy ; to the philosopher, by the restraints on the freedom of learning and teaching which every Church exercises, when it is strong enough ; to the conscientious soul, by the introspective hunting after sins of the mint and cummin type, the fear of theological error, and the overpowering terror of possible damnation, which have accompanied the Churches like their shadow, I need not now consider ; but

¹ *Report of the Church Congress, Manchester, 1888, p. 252.*

they are assuredly not small. If agnostics lose heavily on the one side, they gain a good deal on the other. People who talk about the comforts of belief appear to forget its discomforts; they ignore the fact that the Christianity of the Churches is something more than faith in the ideal personality of Jesus, which they create for themselves, *plus* so much as can be carried into practice, without disorganising civil society, of the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount. Trip in morals or in doctrine (especially in doctrine), without due repentance or retractation, or fail to get properly baptized before you die, and a *plébiscite* of the Christians of Europe, if they were true to their creeds, would affirm your everlasting damnation by an immense majority.

Preachers, orthodox and heterodox, din into our ears that the world cannot get on without faith of some sort. There is a sense in which that is as eminently as obviously true; there is another, in which, in my judgment, it is as eminently as obviously false, and it seems to me that the hortatory, or pulpit, mind is apt to oscillate between the false and the true meanings, without being aware of the fact.

It is quite true that the ground of every one of our actions, and the validity of all our reasonings, rest upon the great act of faith, which leads us to take the experience of the past as a safe guide in our dealings with the present and the future. From the nature of ratiocination, it is obvious that the axioms, on which it is based, cannot be demonstrated by ratiocination. It is also a trite observation that, in the business of life, we constantly take the most serious action upon evidence of an utterly insufficient character. But it is surely plain that faith is not necessarily entitled to dispense with ratiocination because ratiocination cannot dispense with faith as a starting-point; and that because we are often obliged, by the pressure of events, to act on very bad evidence, it does not follow that it is

proper to act on such evidence when the pressure is absent.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." In the authorised version, "substance" stands for "assurance," and "evidence" for "proving." The question of the exact meaning of the two words, *ὑπόστασις* and *ἔλεγχος*, affords a fine field of discussion for the scholar and the metaphysician. But I fancy we shall be not far from the mark if we take the writer to have had in his mind the profound psychological truth, that men constantly feel certain about things for which they strongly hope, but have no evidence, in the legal or logical sense of the word; and he calls this feeling "faith." I may have the most absolute faith that a friend has not committed the crime of which he is accused. In the early days of English history, if my friend could have obtained a few more compurgators of a like robust faith, he would have been acquitted. At the present day, if I tendered myself as a witness on that score, the judge would tell me to stand down, and the youngest barrister would smile at my simplicity. Miserable indeed is the man who has not such faith in some of his fellow-men—only less miserable than the man who allows himself to forget that such faith is not, strictly speaking, evidence; and when his faith is disappointed, as will happen now and again, turns Timon and blames the universe for his own blunders. And so, if a man can find a friend, the hypostasis of all his hopes, the mirror of his ethical ideal, in the Jesus of any, or all, of the Gospels, let him live by faith in that ideal. Who shall or can forbid him? But let him not delude himself with the notion that his faith is evidence of the objective reality of that in which he trusts. Such evidence is to be obtained only by the use of the methods of science, as applied to history and to literature, and it amounts at present to very little.

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN RELATION TO JUDAIC CHRISTIANITY

[FROM "AGNOSTICISM: A REJOINDER," 1889]

THE most constant reproach which is launched against persons of my way of thinking is that it is all very well for us to talk about the deductions of scientific thought, but what are the poor and the uneducated to do? Has it ever occurred to those who talk in this fashion, that their creeds and the articles of their several confessions, their determination of the exact nature and extent of the teachings of Jesus, their expositions of the real meaning of that which is written in the Epistles (to leave aside all questions concerning the Old Testament), are nothing more than deductions which, at any rate, profess to be the result of strictly scientific thinking, and which are not worth attending to unless they really possess that character? If it is not historically true that such and such things happened in Palestine eighteen centuries ago, what becomes of Christianity? And what is historical truth but that of which the evidence bears strict scientific investigation? I do not call to mind any problem of natural science which has come under my notice which is more difficult, or more curiously interesting as a mere problem, than that of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels and that of the historical value of the narratives which they contain. The Christianity of the Churches stands or falls by the results of the purely scientific investigation of these questions. They were first taken up, in a purely scientific spirit, about a century ago; they have been studied over and over again by men of vast knowledge and critical acumen; but he would be a rash man who should assert that any solution of these problems, as yet formulated, is exhaustive. The most that can be said is that certain prevalent solutions are certainly false, while others are more or less probably true.

If I am doing my best to rouse my countrymen out of their dogmatic slumbers, it is not that they may be amused by seeing who gets the best of it in a contest between a "scientist" and a theologian. The serious question is whether theological men of science, or theological special pleaders, are to have the confidence of the general public; it is the question whether a country in which it is possible for a body of excellent clerical and lay gentlemen to discuss, in public meeting assembled, how much it is desirable to let the congregations of the faithful know of the results of biblical criticism, is likely to wake up with anything short of the grasp of a rough lay hand upon its shoulder; it is the question whether the New Testament books, being, as I believe they were, written and compiled by people who, according to their lights, were perfectly sincere, will not, when properly studied as ordinary historical documents, afford us the means of self-criticism. And it must be remembered that the New Testament books are not responsible for the doctrine invented by the Churches that they are anything but ordinary historical documents. The author of the third gospel tells us, as straightforwardly as a man can, that he has no claim to any other character than that of an ordinary compiler and editor, who had before him the works of many and variously qualified predecessors.

In my former papers, according to Dr. Wace, I have evaded giving an answer to his main proposition, which he states as follows—

Apart from all disputed points of criticism, no one practically doubts that our Lord lived, and that He died on the cross, in the most intense sense of filial relation to His Father in Heaven,

and that He bore testimony to that Father's providence, love, and grace towards mankind. The Lord's Prayer affords a sufficient evidence on these points. If the Sermon on the Mount alone be added, the whole unseen world, of which the Agnostic refuses to know anything, stands unveiled before us. . . . If Jesus Christ preached that Sermon, made those promises, and taught that prayer, then any one who says that we know nothing of God, or of a future life, or of an unseen world, says that he does not believe Jesus Christ (pp. 354-355).

Again—

The main question at issue, in a word, is one which Professor Huxley has chosen to leave entirely on one side—whether, namely, allowing for the utmost uncertainty on other points of the criticism to which he appeals, there is any reasonable doubt that the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount afford a true account of our Lord's essential belief and cardinal teaching (p. 355).

I certainly was not aware that I had evaded the questions here stated; indeed I should say that I have indicated my reply to them pretty clearly; but, as Dr. Wace wants a plainer answer, he shall certainly be gratified. If, as Dr. Wace declares it is, his "whole case is involved in" the argument as stated in the latter of these two extracts, so much the worse for his whole case. For I am of opinion that there is the gravest reason for doubting whether the "Sermon on the Mount" was ever preached, and whether the so-called "Lord's Prayer" was ever prayed, by Jesus of Nazareth. My reasons for this opinion are, among others, these:—There is now no doubt that the three Synoptic Gospels, so far from being the work of three independent writers, are closely inter-dependent,¹ and that in one of two ways. Either all three contain, as their foundation, versions, to a large extent verbally identical, of one and the same tradition; or two of them are thus closely dependent on the third;

¹ I suppose this is what Dr. Wace is thinking about when he says that I allege that there "is no visible escape" from the supposition of an *Ur-Marcus* (p. 367). That a "theologian of repute" should confound an indisputable fact with one of the modes of explaining that fact is not so singular as those who are unaccustomed to the ways of theologians might imagine.

and the opinion of the majority of the best critics has of late years more and more converged towards the conviction that our canonical second gospel (the so-called "Mark's" Gospel) is that which most closely represents the primitive groundwork of the three.¹ That I take to be one of the most valuable results of New Testament criticism, of immeasurably greater importance than the discussion about dates and authorship.

But if, as I believe to be the case, beyond any rational doubt or dispute, the second gospel is the nearest extant representative of the oldest tradition, whether written or oral, how comes it that it contains neither the "Sermon on the Mount" nor the "Lord's Prayer," those typical embodiments, according to Dr. Wace, of the "essential belief and cardinal teaching" of Jesus? Not only does "Mark's" gospel fail to contain the "Sermon on the Mount," or anything but a very few of the sayings contained in that collection; but, at the point of the history of Jesus where the "Sermon" occurs in "Matthew," there is in "Mark" an apparently unbroken narrative from the calling of James and John to the healing of Simon's wife's mother. Thus the oldest tradition not only ignores the "Sermon on the Mount," but, by implication, raises a probability against its being delivered when and where the

¹ Any examiner whose duty it has been to examine into a case of "copying" will be particularly well prepared to appreciate the force of the case stated in that most excellent little book, *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels*, by Dr. Abbott and Mr. Rushbrooke (Macmillan, 1884). To those who have not passed through such painful experiences I may recommend the brief discussion of the genuineness of the "Casket Letters" in my friend Mr. Skelton's interesting book, *Maitland of Lethington*. The second edition of Holtzmann's *Lehrbuch*, published in 1886, gives a remarkably fair and full account of the present results of criticism. At p. 366 he writes that the present burning question is whether the "relatively primitive narrative and the root of the other synoptic texts is contained in Matthew or in Mark. It is only on this point that properly-informed (*sachkundige*) critics differ," and he decides in favour of Mark.

later "Matthew" inserts it in his compilation.

And still more weighty is the fact that the third gospel, the author of which tells us that he wrote after "many" others had "taken in hand" the same enterprise; who should therefore have known the first gospel (if it existed), and was bound to pay to it the deference due to the work of an apostolic eye-witness (if he had any reason for thinking it was so)—this writer, who exhibits far more literary competence than the other two, ignores any "Sermon on the Mount," such as that reported by "Matthew," just as much as the oldest authority does. Yet "Luke" has a great many passages identical, or parallel, with those in "Matthew's" "Sermon on the Mount," which are, for the most part, scattered about in a totally different connection.

Interposed, however, between the nomination of the Apostles and a visit to Capernaum; occupying, therefore, a place which answers to that of the "Sermon on the Mount," in the first gospel, there is, in the third gospel a discourse which is as closely similar to the "Sermon on the Mount," in some particulars, as it is widely unlike it in others.

This discourse is said to have been delivered in a "plain" or "level place" (Luke vi. 17), and by way of distinction we may call it the "Sermon on the Plain."

I see no reason to doubt that the two Evangelists are dealing, to a considerable extent, with the same traditional material; and a comparison of the two "Sermons" suggests very strongly that "Luke's" version is the earlier. The correspondences between the two forbid the notion that they are independent. They both begin with a series of blessings, some of which are almost verbally identical. In the middle of each (Luke vi. 27-38, Matt. v. 43-48) there is a striking exposition of the ethical spirit of the command given in Leviticus xix. 18. And each ends with a passage con-

taining the declaration that a tree is to be known by its fruit, and the parable of the house built on the sand. But while there are only 29 verses in the "Sermon on the Plain," there are 107 in the "Sermon on the Mount"; the excess in length of the latter being chiefly due to the long interpolations, one of 30 verses before, and one of 34 verses after, the middlemost parallelism with Luke. Under these circumstances it is quite impossible to admit that there is more probability that "Matthew's" version of the Sermon is historically accurate, than there is that Luke's version is so; and they cannot both be accurate.

"Luke" either knew the collection of loosely-connected and aphoristic utterances which appear under the name of the "Sermon on the Mount" in "Matthew"; or he did not. If he did not, he must have been ignorant of the existence of such a document as our canonical "Matthew," a fact which does not make for the genuineness, or the authority, of that book. If he did, he has shown that he does not care for its authority on a matter of fact of no small importance; and that does not permit us to conceive that he believed the first gospel to be the work of an authority to whom he ought to defer, let alone that of an apostolic eye-witness.

The tradition of the Church about the second gospel, which I believe to be quite worthless, but which is all the evidence there is for "Mark's" authorship, would have us believe that "Mark" was little more than the mouthpiece of the apostle Peter. Consequently, we are to suppose that Peter either did not know, or did not care very much for, that account of the "essential belief and cardinal teaching" of Jesus which is contained in the Sermon on the Mount; and, certainly, he could not have shared Dr. Wace's view of its importance.¹

¹ Holtzmann (*Die synoptischen Evangelien*, 1863, p. 75), following Ewald, argues that the "Source A" (= the threefold tradition, more or less) contained something that answered to the "Sermon on the Plain" immediately after the

I thought that all fairly attentive and intelligent students of the gospels, to say nothing of theologians of reputation, knew these things. But how can any one who does know them have the conscience to ask whether there is "any reasonable doubt" that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Jesus of Nazareth? If conjecture is permissible, where nothing else is possible, the most probable conjecture seems to be that "Matthew," having a *cento* of sayings attributed—rightly or wrongly it is impossible to say—to Jesus among his materials, thought they were, or might be, records of a continuous discourse, and put them in at the place he thought likeliest. Ancient historians of the highest character saw no harm in composing long speeches which never were spoken, and putting them into the mouths of statesmen and warriors; and I presume that whoever is represented by "Matthew" would have been grievously astonished to find that any one objected to his following the example of the best models accessible to him.

So with the "Lord's Prayer." Absent in our representative of the oldest tradition, it appears in both "Matthew" and "Luke." There is reason to believe that every pious Jew, at the commencement of our era, prayed three times a day, according to a formula which is embodied in the present "Schmone-*Esre*"¹ of the Jewish prayer-book. Jesus, who was assuredly, in all respects, a pious Jew, whatever else he may have been, doubtless did the same. Whether he modified the current formula, or whether the so-called "Lord's Prayer" is the prayer substituted for the "Schmone-*Esre*" in the congregations of the Gen-

words of our present "Mark," "And he cometh into a house" (iii. 19). But what conceivable motive could "Mark" have for omitting it? Holtzmann has no doubt, however, that the "Sermon on the Mount" is a compilation, or as he calls it in his recently-published *Lehrbuch* (p. 372), "an artificial mosaic work."

¹ See Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Zweiter Theil, p. 384.

tiles, is a question which can hardly be answered.

In a subsequent passage of Dr. Wace's article (p. 356) he adds to the list of the verities which he imagines to be unassailable, "The Story of the Passion." I am not quite sure what he means by this. I am not aware that any one (with the exception of certain ancient heretics) has propounded doubts as to the reality of the crucifixion; and certainly I have no inclination to argue about the precise accuracy of every detail of that pathetic story of suffering and wrong. But, if Dr. Wace means, as I suppose he does, that that which, according to the orthodox view, happened after the crucifixion, and which is, in a dogmatic sense, the most important part of the story, is founded on solid historical proofs, I must beg leave to express a diametrically opposite conviction.

What do we find when the accounts of the events in question, contained in the three Synoptic gospels, are compared together? In the oldest, there is a simple, straightforward statement which, for anything that I have to urge to the contrary, may be exactly true. In the other two, there is, round this possible and probable nucleus, a mass of accretions of the most questionable character.

The cruelty of death by crucifixion depended very much upon its lingering character. If there were a support for the weight of the body, as not unfrequently was the practice, the pain during the first hours of the infliction was not, necessarily, extreme; nor need any serious physical symptoms, at once, arise from the wounds made by the nails in the hands and feet, supposing they were nailed, which was not invariably the case. When exhaustion set in, and hunger, thirst, and nervous irritation had done their work, the agony of the sufferer must have been terrible; and the more terrible that, in the absence of any effectual disturbance of the machinery of physical life, it might

be prolonged for many hours, or even days. Temperate, strong men, such as were the ordinary Galilean peasants, might live for several days on the cross. It is necessary to bear these facts in mind when we read the account contained in the fifteenth chapter of the second gospel.

Jesus was crucified at the third hour (xv. 25), and the narrative seems to imply that he died immediately after the ninth hour (v. 34). In this case, he would have been crucified only six hours; and the time spent on the cross cannot have been much longer, because Joseph of Arimathæa must have gone to Pilate, made his preparations, and deposited the body in the rock-cut tomb before sunset, which, at that time of the year, was about the twelfth hour. That any one should die after only six hours' crucifixion could not have been at all in accordance with Pilate's large experience of the effects of that method of punishment. It, therefore, quite agrees with what might be expected, that Pilate " marvelled if he were already dead " and required to be satisfied on this point by the testimony of the Roman officer who was in command of the execution party. Those who have paid attention to the extraordinarily difficult question, What are the indisputable signs of death?—will be able to estimate the value of the opinion of a rough soldier on such a subject, even if his report to the Procurator were in no wise affected by the fact that the friend of Jesus, who anxiously awaited his answer, was a man of influence and of wealth.

The inanimate body, wrapped in linen, was deposited in a spacious,¹ cool rock chamber, the entrance of which was closed, not by a well-fitting door, but by a stone rolled against the opening, which would of course allow free passage of air. A little more than thirty-six hours afterwards (Friday, 6 P.M., to Sunday, 6 A.M., or a little after) three

¹ Spacious, because a young man could sit in it "on the right side" (xv. 5), and therefore with plenty of room to spare.

women visit the tomb and find it empty. And they are told by a young man "arrayed in a white robe" that Jesus is gone to his native country of Galilee, and that the disciples and Peter will find him there.

Thus it stands, plainly recorded, in the oldest tradition that, for any evidence to the contrary, the sepulchre may have been emptied at any time during the Friday or Saturday nights. If it is said that no Jew would have violated the Sabbath by taking the former course, it is to be recollected that Joseph of Arimathæa might well be familiar with that wise and liberal interpretation of the fourth commandment, which permitted works of mercy to men—nay, even the drawing of an ox or an ass out of a pit—on the Sabbath. At any rate, the Saturday night was free to the most scrupulous of observers of the Law.

These are the facts of the case as stated by the oldest extant narrative of them. I do not see why any one should have a word to say against the inherent probability of that narrative; and, for my part, I am quite ready to accept it as an historical fact, that so much and no more is positively known of the end of Jesus of Nazareth. On what grounds can a reasonable man be asked to believe any more? So far as the narrative in the first gospel, on the one hand, and those in the third gospel and the Acts, on the other, go beyond what is stated in the second gospel, they are hopelessly discrepant with one another. And this is the more significant because the pregnant phrase "some doubted," in the first gospel, is ignored in the third.

But it is said that we have the witness Paul speaking to us directly in the Epistles. There is little doubt that we have, and a very singular witness he is. According to his own showing, Paul, in the vigour of his manhood, with every means of becoming acquainted, at first hand, with the evidence of eye-witnesses, not merely refused to credit them, but "persecuted the Church of God and

made havoc of it." The reasoning of Stephen fell dead upon the acute intellect of this zealot for the traditions of his fathers: his eyes were blind to the ecstatic illumination of the martyr's countenance "as it had been the face of an angel;" and when, at the words "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," the murderous mob rushed upon and stoned the rapt disciple of Jesus, Paul ostentatiously made himself their official accomplice.

Yet this strange man, because he has a vision one day, at once, and with equally headlong zeal, flies to the opposite pole of opinion. And he is most careful to tell us that he abstained from any re-examination of the facts.

Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia. (Galatians i. 16, 17.)

I do not presume to quarrel with Paul's procedure. If it satisfied him, that was his affair; and, if it satisfies any one else, I am not called upon to dispute the right of that person to be satisfied. But I certainly have the right to say that it would not satisfy me in like case; that I should be very much ashamed to pretend that it could, or ought to, satisfy me; and that I can entertain but a very low estimate of the value of the evidence of people who are to be satisfied in this fashion, when questions of objective fact, in which their faith is interested, are concerned. So that when I am called upon to believe a great deal more than the oldest gospel tells me about the final events of the history of Jesus on the authority of Paul (1 Corinthians xv. 5-8) I must pause. Did he think it, at any subsequent time, worth while "To confer with flesh and blood," or, in modern phrase, to re-examine the facts for himself? or was he ready to accept anything that fitted in with his preconceived ideas? Does he mean, when he speaks of all the appearances of Jesus after the crucifixion as if

they were of the same kind, that they were all visions, like the manifestation to himself? And, finally, how is this account to be reconciled with those in the first and third gospels—which, as we have seen, disagree with one another?

Until these questions are satisfactorily answered, I am afraid that, so far as I am concerned, Paul's testimony cannot be seriously regarded, except as it may afford evidence of the state of traditional opinion at the time at which he wrote, say between 55 and 60 A.D.; that is, more than twenty years after the event; a period much more than sufficient for the development of any amount of mythology about matters of which nothing was really known. A few years later, among the contemporaries and neighbours of the Jews, and, if the most probable interpretation of the Apocalypse can be trusted, among the followers of Jesus also, it was fully believed, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, that the Emperor Nero was not really dead, but that he was hidden away somewhere in the East, and would speedily come again at the head of a great army, to be revenged upon his enemies.¹

Thus, I conceive that I have shown cause for the opinion that Dr. Wace's challenge touching the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the Passion was more valorous than discreet. After all this discussion, I am still at the agnostic point. Tell me, first, what Jesus can be proved to have been, said, and done, and I will say whether I believe him, or in him,² or not. As Dr. Wace admits that I have dissipated his lingering shade of unbelief about the

¹ King Herod had not the least difficulty in supposing the resurrection of John the Baptist—"John, whom I beheaded, he is risen" (Mark vi. 16).

² I am very sorry for the interpolated "in," because citation ought to be accurate in small things as in great. But what difference it makes whether one "believes Jesus" or "believes in Jesus" much thought has not enabled me to discover. If you "believe him" you must believe him to be what he professed to be—that is, "believe in him;" and if you "believe in him" you must necessarily "believe him."

bedevilment of the Gadarene pigs, he might have done something to help mine. Instead of that, he manifests a total want of conception of the nature of the obstacles which impede the conversion of his "infidels."

The truth I believe to be, that the difficulties in the way of arriving at a sure conclusion as to these matters, from the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, or any other data offered by the Synoptic gospels (and *a fortiori* from the fourth gospel), are insuperable. Every one of these records is coloured by the prepossessions of those among whom the primitive traditions arose, and of those by whom they were collected and edited: and the difficulty of making allowance for these prepossessions is enhanced by our ignorance of the exact dates at which the documents were first put together; of the extent to which they have been subsequently worked over and interpolated; and of the historical sense, or want of sense, and the dogmatic tendencies of their compilers and editors. Let us see if there is any other road which will take us into something better than negation.

There is a widespread notion that the "primitive Church," while under the guidance of the Apostles and their immediate successors, was a sort of dogmatic dovecot, pervaded by the most loving unity and doctrinal harmony. Protestants, especially, are fond of attributing to themselves the merit of being nearer "the Church of the Apostles" than their neighbours; and they are the less to be excused for their strange delusion because they are great readers of the documents which prove the exact contrary. The fact is that, in the course of the first three centuries of its existence, the Church rapidly underwent a process of evolution of the most remarkable character, the final stage of which is far more different from the first than Anglicanism is from Quakerism. The key to the comprehension of the problem of the origin of that which is now called "Christianity," and its relation to Jesus of Nazareth, lies here. Nor can we

arrive at any sound conclusion as to what it is probable that Jesus actually said and did, without being clear on this head. By far the most important and subsequently influential steps in the evolution of Christianity took place in the course of the century, more or less, which followed upon the crucifixion. It is almost the darkest period of Church history, but, most fortunately, the beginning and the end of the period are brightly illuminated by the contemporary evidence of two writers of whose historical existence there is no doubt,¹ and against the genuineness of whose most important works there is no widely-admitted objection. These are Justin, the philosopher and martyr, and Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. I shall call upon these witnesses only to testify to the condition of opinion among those who called themselves disciples of Jesus in their time.

Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, which was written somewhere about the middle of the second century, enumerates certain categories of persons who, in his opinion, will, or will not, be saved.² These are:—

1. Orthodox Jews who refuse to believe that Jesus is the Christ. *Not Saved.*

2. Jews who observe the Law; believe Jesus to be the Christ; but who insist on the observance of the Law by Gentile converts. *Not Saved.*

3. Jews who observe the Law; believe Jesus to be the Christ, and hold that Gentile converts need not observe the Law. *Saved* (in Justin's opinion; but some of his fellow-Christians think the contrary).

4. Gentile converts to the belief in Jesus as the Christ, who observe the Law. *Saved* (possibly).

5. Gentile believers in Jesus as the

¹ True for Justin: but there is a school of theological critics, who more or less question the historical reality of Paul, and the genuineness of even the four cardinal epistles.

² See *Dial. cum Tryphone*, § 47 and § 35. It is to be understood that Justin does not arrange these categories in order, as I have done.

Christ, who do not observe the Law themselves (except so far as the refusal of idol sacrifices), but do not consider those who do observe it heretics. *Saved* (this is Justin's own view).

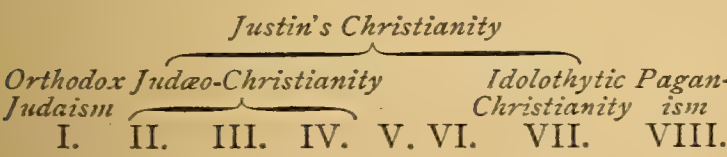
6. Gentile believers who do not observe the Law, except in refusing idol sacrifices, and hold those who do observe it to be heretics. *Saved*.

7. Gentiles who believe Jesus to be the Christ and call themselves Christians, but who eat meats sacrificed to idols. *Not Saved*.

8. Gentiles who disbelieve in Jesus as the Christ. *Not Saved*.

Justin does not consider Christians who believe in the natural birth of Jesus, of whom he implies that there is a respectable minority, to be heretics, though he himself strongly holds the preternatural birth of Jesus and his pre-existence as the "Logos" or "Word." He conceives the Logos to be a second God, inferior to the first, unknowable God, with respect to whom Justin, like Philo, is a complete agnostic. The Holy Spirit is not regarded by Justin as a separate personality, and is often mixed up with the "Logos." The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is, for Justin, a heresy; and he is as firm a believer in the resurrection of the body, as in the speedy Second Coming and the establishment of the millennium.

This pillar of the Church in the middle of the second century—a much-travelled native of Samaria—was certainly well acquainted with Rome, probably with Alexandria; and it is likely that he knew the state of opinion throughout the length and breadth of the Christian world as well as any man of his time. If the various categories above enumerated are arranged in a series thus:—

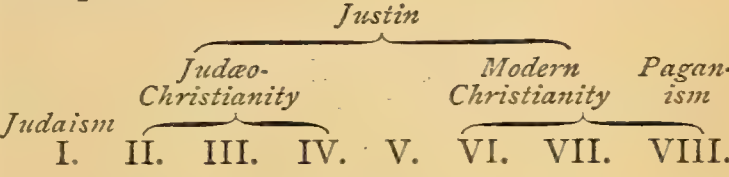


it is obvious that they form a gradational series from orthodox Judaism, on the extreme left, to Paganism, whether

philosophic or popular, on the extreme right; and it will further be observed that, while Justin's conception of Christianity is very broad, he rigorously excludes two classes of persons who, in his time, called themselves Christians; namely, those who insist on circumcision and other observances of the Law on the part of Gentile converts: that is to say, the strict Judæo-Christians (II.): and, on the other hand, those who assert the lawfulness of eating meat offered to idols—whether they are Gnostic or not (VII.). These last I have called "idolothytic" Christians, because I cannot devise a better name, not because it is strictly defensible etymologically.

At the present moment, I do not suppose there is an English missionary in any heathen land who would trouble himself whether the materials of his dinner had been previously offered to idols or not. On the other hand I suppose there is no Protestant sect within the pale of orthodoxy, to say nothing of the Roman and Greek Churches, which would hesitate to declare the practice of circumcision and the observance of the Jewish Sabbath and dietary rules, shockingly heretical.

Modern Christianity has, in fact, not only shifted far to the right of Justin's position, but it is of much narrower compass.



For, though it includes VII., and even, in saint and relic worship, cuts a "monstrous cantle" out of paganism, it excludes, not only all Judæo-Christians, but all who doubt that such are heretics. Ever since the thirteenth century, the Inquisition would have cheerfully burned, and in Spain did abundantly burn, all persons who came under the categories II., III., IV., V. And the wolf would play the same havoc now, if it could only get its blood-stained jaws free from the muzzle imposed by the secular arm.

Further, there is not a Protestant body except the Unitarian, which would not declare Justin himself a heretic, on account of his doctrine of the inferior godship of the Logos ; while I am very much afraid that, in strict logic, Dr. Wace would be under the necessity, so painful to him, of calling him an "infidel," on the same and on other grounds.

Now let us turn to our other authority. If there is any result of critical investigations of the sources of Christianity which is certain,¹ it is that Paul of Tarsus wrote the Epistle to the Galatians somewhere between the years 55 and 60 A.D., that is to say, roughly, twenty, or five-and-twenty years after the crucifixion. If this is so, the Epistle to the Galatians is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, of extant documentary evidences of the state of the primitive Church. And, be it observed, if it is Paul's writing, it unquestionably furnishes us with the evidence of a participator in the transactions narrated. With the exception of two or three of the other Pauline Epistles, there is not one solitary book in the New Testament of the authorship and authority of which we have such good evidence.

And what is the state of things we find disclosed? A bitter quarrel, in his account of which Paul by no means minces matters, or hesitates to hurl defiant sarcasms against those who were "reputed to be pillars": James, "the brother of the Lord," Peter, the rock on whom Jesus is said to have built his Church, and John, "the beloved disciple." And no deference toward "the rock" withholds Paul from charging Peter to his face with "dissimulation."

The subject of the hot dispute was simply this. Were Gentile converts bound to obey the Law or not? Paul answered in the negative; and, acting upon his opinion, he had created at

Antioch (and elsewhere) a specifically "Christian" community, the sole qualifications for admission into which were the confession of the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and baptism upon that confession. In the epistle in question, Paul puts this—his "gospel," as he calls it—in its most extreme form. Not only does he deny the necessity of conformity with the Law, but he declares such conformity to have a negative value. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing" (Galatians v. 2). He calls the legal observances "beggarly rudiments," and anathematizes every one who preaches to the Galatians any other gospel than his own. That is to say, by direct consequence, he anathematizes the Nazarenes of Jerusalem, whose zeal for the Law is testified by James in a passage of the Acts cited further on. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, dealing with the question of eating meat offered to idols, it is clear that Paul himself thinks it a matter of indifference; but he advises that it should not be done, for the sake of the weaker brethren. On the other hand, the Nazarenes of Jerusalem most strenuously opposed Paul's "gospel," insisting on every convert becoming a regular Jewish proselyte, and consequently on his observance of the whole Law; and this party was led by James and Peter and John (Galatians ii. 9). Paul does not suggest that the question of principle was settled by the discussion referred to in Galatians. All he says is, that it ended in the practical agreement that he and Barnabas should do as they had been doing, in respect to the Gentiles; while James and Peter and John should deal in their own fashion with Jewish converts. Afterwards, he complains bitterly of Peter, because, when on a visit to Antioch, he, at first, inclined to Paul's view and ate with the Gentile converts; but when "certain came from James," "drew back, and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews

¹ I guard myself against being supposed to affirm that even the four cardinal epistles of Paul may not have been seriously tampered with. See note 1, p. 102 above.

dissembled likewise with him ; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation " (Galatians ii. 12-13).

There is but one conclusion to be drawn from Paul's account of this famous dispute, the settlement of which determined the fortunes of the nascent religion. It is that the disciples at Jerusalem, headed by "James, the Lord's brother," and by the leading apostles, Peter and John, were strict Jews, who had objected to admit any converts into their body, unless these, either by birth, or by becoming proselytes, were also strict Jews. In fact, the sole difference between James and Peter and John, with the body of the disciples whom they led and the Jews by whom they were surrounded, and with whom they, for many years, shared the religious observances of the Temple, was that they believed that the Messiah, whom the leaders of the nation yet looked for, had already come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Acts of the Apostles is hardly a very trustworthy history ; it is certainly of later date than the Pauline Epistles, supposing them to be genuine. And the writer's version of the conference of which Paul gives so graphic a description, if that is correct, is unmistakably coloured with all the art of a reconciler, anxious to cover up a scandal. But it is none the less instructive on this account. The judgment of the "council" delivered by James is that the Gentile converts shall merely "abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood and from things strangled, and from fornication." But notwithstanding the accommodation in which the writer of the Acts would have us believe, the Jerusalem Church held to its endeavour to retain the observance of the Law. Long after the conference, some time after the writing of the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians, and immediately after the despatch of that to the Romans, Paul makes his last visit to Jerusalem, and presents himself to James

and all the elders. And this is what the Acts tells us of the interview :—

And they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands [or myriads] there are among the Jews of them which have believed ; and they are all zealous for the law ; and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. (Acts xxi. 20, 21.)

They therefore request that he should perform a certain public religious act in the Temple, in order that

all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee ; but that thou thyself walkest orderly, keeping the law (*ibid.* 24).¹

How far Paul could do what he is here requested to do, and which the writer of the Acts goes on to say he did, with a clear conscience, if he wrote the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians I may leave any candid reader of these epistles to decide. The point to which I wish to direct attention is the declaration that the Jerusalem Church, led by the brother of Jesus and by his personal disciples and friends, twenty years and more after his death, consisted of strict and zealous Jews.

Tertullus, the orator, caring very little about the internal dissensions of the followers of Jesus, speaks of Paul as a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv. 5), which must have affected James much in the same way as it would have moved the Archbishop of Canterbury, in George Fox's day, to hear the latter called a "ringleader of the sect of Anglicans." In fact, "Nazarene" was, as is well known, the distinctive appellation applied to Jesus ; his immediate followers were known as Nazarenes ; while the congregation of the disciples, and, later, of converts at Jerusalem—the Jerusalem Church—was emphatically the "sect of

¹ [Paul, in fact, is required to commit in Jerusalem, an act of the same character as that which he brands as "dissimulation" on the part of Peter in Antioch.]

the Nazarenes," no more, in itself, to be regarded as anything outside Judaism than the sect of the Sadducees, or that of the Essenes¹. In fact, the tenets of both the Sadducees and the Essenes diverged much more widely from the Pharisaic standard of orthodoxy than Nazarenism did.

Let us consider the position of affairs now (A.D. 50-60) in relation to that which obtained in Justin's time, a century later. It is plain that the Nazarenes—presided over by James, "the brother of the Lord," and comprising within their body all the twelve apostles—belonged to Justin's second category of "Jews who observe the Law, believe Jesus to be the Christ, but who insist on the observance of the Law by Gentile converts," up till the time at which the controversy reported by Paul arose. They then, according to Paul, simply allowed him to form his congregations of non-legal Gentile converts at Antioch and elsewhere; and it would seem that it was to these converts, who would come under Justin's fifth category, that the title of "Christian" was first applied. If any of these Christians had acted upon the more than half-permission given by Paul, and had eaten meats offered to idols, they would have belonged to Justin's seventh category.

Hence, it appears that, if Justin's opinion, which was probably that of the Church generally in the middle of the second century, was correct, James and Peter and John and their followers could not be saved; neither could Paul, if he carried into practice his views as to the indifference of eating meats offered to idols. Or, to put the matter another way, the centre of gravity of orthodoxy, which is at the extreme right of the series in the nineteenth century, was at the extreme left, just before the middle of the first century, when the "sect of the Nazarenes" constituted the whole church founded by Jesus and the

apostles; while, in the time of Justin, it lay midway between the two. It is therefore a profound mistake to imagine that the Judæo-Christians (Nazarenes and Ebionites) of later times were heretical outgrowths from a primitive universalist "Christianity." On the contrary, the universalist "Christianity" is an outgrowth from the primitive, purely Jewish, Nazarenism; which, gradually eliminating all the ceremonial and dietary parts of the Jewish law, has thrust aside its parent, and all the intermediate stages of its development, into the position of damnable heresies.

Such being the case, we are in a position to form a safe judgment of the limits within which the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth must have been confined. Ecclesiastical authority would have us believe that the words which are given at the end of the first Gospel, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," are part of the last commands of Jesus, issued at the moment of his parting with the eleven. If so, Peter and John must have heard these words; they are too plain to be misunderstood; and the occasion is too solemn for them ever to be forgotten. Yet the "Acts" tells us that Peter needed a vision to enable him so much as to baptize Cornelius; and Paul, in the Galatians, knows nothing of words which would have completely borne him out as against those who, though they heard, must be supposed to have either forgotten, or ignored them. On the other hand, Peter and John, who are supposed to have heard the "Sermon on the Mount," know nothing of the saying that Jesus had not come to destroy the Law, but that every jot and tittle of the Law must be fulfilled, which surely would have been pretty good evidence for their view of the question.

We are sometimes told that the personal friends and daily companions of Jesus remained zealous Jews and opposed

¹ All this was quite clearly pointed out by Ritschl nearly forty years ago. See *Die Entstehung der alt-katholischen Kirche* (1850), p. 108.

Paul's innovations, because they were hard of heart and dull of comprehension. This hypothesis is hardly in accordance with the concomitant faith of those who adopt it, in the miraculous insight and superhuman sagacity of their Master ; nor do I see any way of getting it to harmonise with the orthodox postulate ; namely, that Matthew was the author of the first gospel and John of the fourth. If that is so, then, most assuredly, Matthew was no dullard ; and as for the fourth gospel—a theosophic romance of the first order—it could have been written by none but a man of remarkable literary capacity, who had drunk deep of Alexandrian philosophy. Moreover, the doctrine of the writer of the fourth gospel is more remote from that of the “sect of the Nazarenes” than is that of Paul himself. I am quite aware that orthodox critics have been capable of maintaining that John, the Nazarene, who was probably well past fifty years of age, when he is supposed to have written the most thoroughly Judaising book in the New Testament—the Apocalypse—in the roughest of Greek, underwent an astounding metamorphosis of both doctrine and style by the time he reached the ripe age of ninety or so, and provided the world with a history in which the acutest critic cannot [always] make out where the speeches of Jesus end and the text of the narrative begins ; while that narrative is utterly irreconcilable, in regard to matters of fact, with that of his fellow-apostle, Matthew.

The end of the whole matter is this :—The “sect of the Nazarenes,” the brother and the immediate followers of Jesus, commissioned by him as apostles, and those who were taught by them up to the year 50 A.D., were not “Christians” in the sense in which that term has been understood ever since its asserted origin at Antioch, but Jews—strict orthodox Jews—whose belief in the Messiahship of Jesus never led to their exclusion from the Temple services, nor would have shut them out from the wide embrace of

Judaism.¹ The open proclamation of their special view about the Messiah was doubtless offensive to the Pharisees, just as rampant Low Churchism is offensive to bigoted High Churchism in our own country ; or as any kind of dissent is offensive to fervid religionists of all creeds. To the Sadducees, no doubt, the political danger of any Messianic movement was serious ; and they would have been glad to put down Nazarenism, lest it should end in useless rebellion against their Roman masters, like that other Galilean movement headed by Judas, a generation earlier. Galilee was always a hotbed of seditious enthusiasm against the rule of Rome ; and high priest and procurator alike had need to keep a sharp eye upon natives of that district. On the whole, however, the Nazarenes were but little troubled for the first twenty years of their existence ; and the undying hatred of the Jews against those later converts, whom they regarded as apostates and fautors of a sham Judaism, was awakened by Paul. From their point of view, he was a mere renegade Jew, opposed alike to orthodox Judaism and to orthodox Nazarenism ; and whose teachings threatened Judaism with destruction. And, from their point of view, they were quite right. In the course of a century, Pauline influences had a large share in driving primitive Nazarenism from being the very heart of the new faith into the position of scouted error ; and the spirit of Paul's doctrine continued its work of driving Christianity farther and farther away from Judaism, until “meats offered to idols” might be eaten without scruple, while the Nazarene methods of observing even the Sabbath, or the Passover, were branded with the mark of Judaising heresy.

But if the primitive Nazarenes of whom the Acts speaks were orthodox Jews, what sort of probability can there

¹ “If every one was baptized as soon as he acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, the first Christians can have been aware of no other essential differences from the Jews.”—Zeller, *Vorträge* (1865), p. 26

be that Jesus was anything else? How can he have founded the universal religion which was not heard of till twenty years after his death?¹ That Jesus possessed, in a rare degree, the gift of attaching men to his person and to his fortunes; that he was the author of many a striking saying, and the advocate of equity, of love, and of humility; that he may have disregarded the subtleties of the bigots for legal observance, and appealed rather to those noble conceptions of religion which constituted the pith and kernel of the teaching of the great prophets of his nation seven hundred years earlier; and that, in the last scenes of his career, he may have embodied the ideal sufferer of Isaiah, may

¹ Dr. Harnack, in the lately-published second edition of his *Dogmengeschichte*, says (p. 39), "Jesus Christ brought forward no new doctrine"; and again, (p. 65), "It is not difficult to set against every portion of the utterances of Jesus an observation which deprives him of originality." See also Zusatz 4, on the same page.

be, as I think it is, extremely probable. But all this involves not a step beyond the borders of orthodox Judaism. Again, who is to say whether Jesus proclaimed himself the veritable Messiah, expected by his nation since the appearance of the pseudo-prophetic work of Daniel, a century and a half before his time; or whether the enthusiasm of his followers gradually forced him to assume that position?

But one thing is quite certain: if that belief in the speedy second coming of the Messiah which was shared by all parties in the primitive Church, whether Nazarene or Pauline; which Jesus is made to prophesy, over and over again, in the Synoptic gospels; and which dominated the life of Christians during the first century after the crucifixion;—if he believed and taught that, then assuredly he was under an illusion, and he is responsible for that which the mere effluxion of time has demonstrated to be a prodigious error.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Nemo ergo ex me scire quærat, quod me nescire scio, nisi forte ut nescire discat.—AUGUSTINUS, *De Civ. Dei*, xii. 7.

THE people who call themselves "Agnostics" have been charged with doing so because they have not the courage to declare themselves "Infidels." It has been insinuated that they have adopted a new name in order to escape the unpleasantness which attaches to their proper denomination. To this wholly erroneous imputation, I have replied by showing that the term "Agnostic" did, as a matter of fact, arise in a manner which negatives it; and my statement has not been, and cannot be, refuted. Moreover, speaking for myself, and without impugning the right of any other person to use the term in another sense, I further say that Agnosticism is not properly described as a "negative" creed, nor indeed as a

creed of any kind, except in so far as it expresses absolute faith in the validity of a principle, which is as much ethical as intellectual. This principle may be stated in various ways, but they all amount to this: that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This is what Agnosticism asserts; and, in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately

supported propositions. The justification of the Agnostic principle lies in the success which follows upon its application, whether in the field of natural, or in that of civil, history; and in the fact that, so far as these topics are concerned, no sane man thinks of denying its validity.

Still speaking for myself, I add, that though Agnosticism is not, and cannot be, a creed, except in so far as its general principle is concerned; yet that the application of that principle results in the denial of, or the suspension of judgment concerning, a number of propositions respecting which our contemporary ecclesiastical "gnostics" profess entire certainty. And, in so far as these ecclesiastical persons can be justified in their old-established custom (which many nowadays think more honoured in the breach than the observance) of using opprobrious names to those who differ from them, I fully admit their right to call me and those who think with me "Infidels"; all I have ventured to urge is that they must not expect us to speak of ourselves by that title.

The extent of the region of the uncertain, the number of the problems the investigation of which ends in a verdict of not proven, will vary according to the knowledge and the intellectual habits of the individual Agnostic. I do not very much care to speak of anything as "unknowable."¹ What I am sure about is that there are many topics about which I know nothing; and which, so far as I can see, are out of reach of my faculties. But whether these things are knowable by any one else is exactly one of those matters which is beyond my knowledge, though I may have a tolerably strong opinion as to the probabilities of the case. Relatively to myself, I am quite sure that the region of uncertainty—the nebulous country in which words play the part of realities—is far more ex-

tensive than I could wish. Materialism and Idealism; Theism and Atheism; the doctrine of the soul and its mortality or immortality—appear in the history of philosophy like the shades of Scandinavian heroes, eternally slaying one another and eternally coming to life again in a metaphysical "Nifelheim." It is getting on for twenty-five centuries, at least, since mankind began seriously to give their minds to these topics. Generation after generation, philosophy has been doomed to roll the stone uphill; and, just as all the world swore it was at the top, down it has rolled to the bottom again. All this is written in innumerable books; and he who will toil through them will discover that the stone is just where it was when the work began. Hume saw this; Kant saw it; since their time, more and more eyes have been cleansed of the films which prevented them from seeing it; until now the weight and number of those who refuse to be the prey of verbal mystifications has begun to tell in practical life.

It was inevitable that a conflict should arise between Agnosticism and Theology; or, rather, I ought to say, between Agnosticism and Ecclesiasticism. For Theology, the science, is one thing; and Ecclesiasticism, the championship of a foregone conclusion¹ as to the truth of a particular form of Theology, is another. With scientific Theology, Agnosticism has no quarrel. On the contrary, the Agnostic, knowing too well the influence of prejudice and idiosyncrasy, even on those who desire most earnestly to be impartial, can wish for nothing more urgently than that the scientific theologian should not only be at perfect liberty to thresh out the matter in his own fashion; but that he should, if he can, find flaws in the Agnostic position; and, even if demonstration is not to be had, that he should put, in their full force, the

¹ I confess that, long ago, I once or twice made this mistake; even to the waste of a capital 'U.' 1893.

¹ "Let us maintain, before we have proved. This seeming paradox is the secret of happiness" (Dr. Newman: Tract 85, p. 85).

grounds of the conclusions he thinks probable. The scientific theologian admits the Agnostic principle, however widely his results may differ from those reached by the majority of Agnostics.

But, as between Agnosticism and Ecclesiasticism, or, as our neighbours across the Channel call it, Clericalism, there can be neither peace nor truce. The Cleric asserts that it is morally wrong not to believe certain propositions, whatever the results of a strict scientific investigation of the evidence of these propositions. He tells us "that religious error is, in itself, of an immoral nature."¹ He declares that he has prejudged certain conclusions, and looks upon those who show cause for arrest of judgment as emissaries of Satan. It necessarily follows that, for him, the attainment of faith, not the ascertainment of truth, is the highest aim of mental life. And, on careful analysis of the nature of this faith, it will too often be found to be, not the mystic process of unity with the Divine, understood by the religious enthusiast; but that which the candid simplicity of a Sunday scholar once defined it to be. "Faith," said this unconscious plagiarist of Tertullian, "is the power of saying you believe things which are incredible."

Now I, and many other Agnostics, believe that faith, in this sense, is an abomination; and though we do not indulge in the luxury of self-righteousness so far as to call those who are not of our way of thinking hard names, we do feel that the disagreement between ourselves and those who hold this doctrine is even more moral than intellectual. It is desirable there should be an end of any mistakes on this topic. If our clerical opponents were clearly aware of the real state of the case, there would be an end of the curious delusion, which often appears between the lines of their writings, that those whom they are so fond of calling "Infidels" are people who not only ought to be, but in their hearts are, ashamed of themselves. It

¹ Dr. Newman, *Essay on Development*, p. 357.

would be discourteous to do more than hint the antipodal opposition of this pleasant dream of theirs to facts.

The clerics and their lay allies commonly tell us, that if we refuse to admit that there is good ground for expressing definite convictions about certain topics, the bonds of human society will dissolve and mankind lapse into savagery. There are several answers to this assertion. One is that the bonds of human society were formed without the aid of their theology; and, in the opinion of not a few competent judges, have been weakened rather than strengthened by a good deal of it. Greek science, Greek art, the ethics of old Israel, the social organisation of old Rome, contrived to come into being, without the help of any one who believed in a single distinctive article of the simplest of the Christian creeds. The science, the art, the jurisprudence, the chief political and social theories, of the modern world have grown out of those of Greece and Rome—not by favour of, but in the teeth of, the fundamental teachings of early Christianity, to which science, art, and any serious occupation with the things of this world, were alike despicable.

Again, all that is best in the ethics of the modern world, in so far as it has not grown out of Greek thought, or Barbarian manhood, is the direct development of the ethics of old Israel. There is no code of legislation, ancient or modern, at once so just and so merciful, so tender to the weak and poor, as the Jewish law; and, if the Gospels are to be trusted, Jesus of Nazareth himself declared that he taught nothing but that which lay implicitly, or explicitly, in the religious and ethical system of his people.

And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he, and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (Mark xii. 32, 33.)

Here is the briefest of summaries of the teaching of the prophets of Israel of

the eighth century; does the Teacher, whose doctrine is thus set forth in his presence, repudiate the exposition? Nay; we are told, on the contrary, that Jesus saw that he "answered discreetly," and replied, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

So that I think that even if the creeds, from the so-called "Apostles'" to the so-called "Athanasian," were swept into oblivion; and even if the human race should arrive at the conclusion that, whether a bishop washes a cup or leaves it unwashed, is not a matter of the least consequence, it will get on very well. The causes which have led to the development of morality in mankind, which have guided or impelled us all the way from the savage to the civilised state, will not cease to operate because a number of ecclesiastical hypotheses turn out to be baseless. And, even if the absurd notion that morality is more the child of speculation than of practical necessity and inherited instinct, had any foundation; if all the world is going to thief, murder, and otherwise misconduct itself as soon as it discovers that certain portions of ancient history are mythical; what is the relevance of such arguments to any one who holds by the Agnostic principle?

Surely, the attempt to cast out Beelzebub by the aid of Beelzebub is a hopeful procedure as compared to that of preserving morality by the aid of immorality. For I suppose it is admitted that an Agnostic may be perfectly sincere, may be competent, and may have studied the question at issue with as much care as his clerical opponents. But, if the Agnostic really believes what he says, the "dreadful consequence" arguer (consistently, I admit, with his own principles) virtually asks him to abstain from telling the truth, or to say what he believes to be untrue, because of the supposed injurious consequences to morality. "Beloved brethren, that we may be spotlessly moral, before all things let us lie," is the sum total of many an ex-

hortation addressed to the "Infidel." Now, as I have already pointed out, we cannot oblige our exhorters. We leave the practical application of the convenient doctrines of "Reserve" and "Non-natural interpretation" to those who invented them.

I trust that I have now made amends for any ambiguity, or want of fulness, in my previous exposition of that which I hold to be the essence of the Agnostic doctrine. Henceforward, I might hope to hear no more of the assertion that we are necessarily Materialists, Idealists, Atheists, Theists, or any other *ists*, if experience had led me to think that the proved falsity of a statement was any guarantee against its repetition. And those who appreciate the nature of our position will see, at once, that when Ecclesiasticism declares that we ought to believe this, that, and the other, and are very wicked if we don't, it is impossible for us to give any answer but this: We have not the slightest objection to believe anything you like, if you will give us good grounds for belief; but, if you cannot, we must respectfully refuse, even if that refusal should wreck morality and insure our own damnation several times over. We are quite content to leave that to the decision of the future. The course of the past has impressed us with the firm conviction that no good ever comes of falsehood, and we feel warranted in refusing even to experiment in that direction.

In the course of the present discussion it has been asserted that the "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Lord's Prayer" furnish a summary and condensed view of the essentials of the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, set forth by himself. Now this supposed *Summa* of Nazarene theology distinctly affirms the existence of a spiritual world, of a Heaven, and of a Hell of fire; it teaches the Fatherhood of God and the malignity of the Devil; it declares the superintending providence of the former and our need of deliverance from the machinations of the latter, it

affirms the fact of demoniac possession and the power of casting out devils by the faithful. And, from these premises, the conclusion is drawn, that those Agnostics who deny that there is any evidence of such a character as to justify certainty, respecting the existence and the nature of the spiritual world, contradict the express declarations of Jesus. I have replied to this argumentation by showing that there is strong reason to doubt the historical accuracy of the attribution to Jesus of either the "Sermon on the Mount" or the "Lord's Prayer"; and, therefore, that the conclusion in question is not warranted, at any rate, on the grounds set forth.

But, whether the Gospels contain trustworthy statements about this and other alleged historical facts or not, it is quite certain that from them, taken together with the other books of the New Testament, we may collect a pretty complete exposition of that theory of the spiritual world which was held by both Nazarenes and Christians; and which was undoubtedly supposed by them to be fully sanctioned by Jesus, though it is just as clear that they did not imagine it contained any revelation by him of something heretofore unknown. If the pneumatological doctrine which pervades the whole New Testament is nowhere systematically stated, it is everywhere assumed. The writers of the Gospels and of the Acts take it for granted, as a matter of common knowledge; and it is easy to gather from these sources a series of propositions, which only need arrangement to form a complete system.

In this system, Man is considered to be a duality formed of a spiritual element, the soul; and a corporeal¹ element,

¹ It is by no means to be assumed that "spiritual" and "corporeal" are exact equivalents of "immaterial" and "material" in the minds of ancient speculators on these topics. The "spiritual body" of the risen dead (1 Cor. xv.) is not the "natural" "flesh and blood" body. Paul does not teach the resurrection of the body in the ordinary sense of the word "body"; a fact, often overlooked, but pregnant with many consequences.

the body. And this duality is repeated in the Universe, which consists of a corporeal world embraced and interpenetrated by a spiritual world. The former consists of the earth, as its principal and central constituent, with the subsidiary sun, planets, and stars. Above the earth is the air, and below is the watery abyss. Whether the heaven, which is conceived to be above the air, and the hell in, or below, the subterranean deeps, are to be taken as corporeal or incorporeal is not clear. However this may be, the heaven and the air, the earth and the abyss, are peopled by innumerable beings analogous in nature to the spiritual element in man, and these spirits are of two kinds, good and bad. The chief of the good spirits, infinitely superior to all the others, and their creator, as well as the creator of the corporeal world and of the bad spirits, is God. His residence is heaven, where he is surrounded by the ordered hosts of good spirits; his angels, or messengers, and the executors of his will throughout the universe.

On the other hand, the chief of the bad spirits is Satan, *the devil par excellence*. He and his company of demons are free to roam through all parts of the universe, except the heaven. These bad spirits are far superior to man in power and subtlety; and their whole energies are devoted to bringing physical and moral evils upon him, and to thwarting, so far as their power goes, the benevolent intentions of the Supreme Being. In fact, the souls and bodies of men form both the theatre and the prize of an incessant warfare between the good and the evil spirits—the powers of light and the powers of darkness. By leading Eve astray, Satan brought sin and death upon mankind. As the gods of the heathen, the demons are the founders and maintainers of idolatry; as the "powers of the air" they afflict mankind with pestilence and famine; as "unclean spirits" they cause disease of mind and body.

The significance of the appearance of

Jesus, in the capacity of the Messiah, or Christ, is the reversal of the satanic work by putting an end to both sin and death. He announces that the kingdom of God is at hand, when the "Prince of this world" shall be finally "cast out" (John xii. 31) from the cosmos, as Jesus, during his earthly career, cast him out from individuals. Then will Satan and all his devilry, along with the wicked whom they have seduced to their destruction, be hurled into the abyss of unquenchable fire—there to endure continual torture, without a hope of winning pardon from the merciful God, their Father; or of moving the glorified Messiah to one more act of pitiful intercession; or even of interrupting, by a momentary sympathy with their wretchedness, the harmonious psalmody of their brother angels and men, eternally lapped in bliss unspeakable.

The strictest Protestant, who refuses to admit the existence of any source of Divine truth, except the Bible, will not deny that every point of the pneumatological theory here set forth has ample scriptural warranty. The Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse assert the existence of the devil, of his demons and of Hell, as plainly as they do that of God and his angels and Heaven. It is plain that the Messianic and the Satanic conceptions of the writers of these books are the obverse and the reverse of the same intellectual coinage. If we turn from Scripture to the traditions of the Fathers and the confessions of the Churches, it will appear that, in this one particular, at any rate, time has brought about no important deviation from primitive belief. From Justin onwards, it may often be a fair question whether God, or the devil, occupies a larger share of the attention of the Fathers. It is the devil who instigates the Roman authorities to persecute; the gods and goddesses of paganism are devils, and idolatry itself is an invention of Satan; if a saint falls away from grace, it is by the seduction of the demon; if heresy arises, the devil

has suggested it; and some of the Fathers¹ go so far as to challenge the pagans to a sort of exorcising match, by way of testing the truth of Christianity. Mediæval Christianity is at one with patristic, on this head. The masses, the clergy, the theologians, and the philosophers alike, live and move and have their being in a world full of demons, in which sorcery and possession are everyday occurrences. Nor did the Reformation make any difference. Whatever else Luther assailed, he left the traditional demonology untouched; nor could any one have entertained a more hearty and uncompromising belief in the devil, than he and, at a later period, the Calvinistic fanatics of New England did. Finally, in these last years of the nineteenth century, the demonological hypotheses of the first century are, explicitly or implicitly, held and occasionally acted upon by the immense majority of Christians of all confessions.

Only here and there has the progress of scientific thought, outside the ecclesiastical world, so far affected Christians, that they and their teachers fight shy of the demonology of their creed. They are fain to conceal their real disbelief in one half of Christian doctrine by judicious silence about it; or, by flight to those refuges for the logically destitute, accommodation or allegory. But the faithful who fly to allegory in order to escape absurdity resemble nothing so much as the sheep in the fable who—to save their lives—jumped into the pit. The allegory pit is too commodious, is ready to swallow up so much more than one wants to put into it. If the story of the temptation is an allegory; if the early recognition of Jesus as the Son of God by the demons is an allegory; if the plain declaration of the writer of the first Epistle of John (iii. 8), "To this end

¹ Tertullian (*Apolog. adv. Gentes*, cap. xxiii.) thus challenges the Roman authorities: let them bring a possessed person into the presence of a Christian before their tribunal; and if the demon does not confess himself to be such, on the order of the Christian, let the Christian be executed out of hand.

was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil," is allegorical, then the Pauline version of the Fall may be allegorical, and still more the words of consecration of the Eucharist, or the promise of the second coming ; in fact, there is not a dogma of ecclesiastical Christianity the scriptural basis of which may not be whittled away by a similar process.

As to accommodation, let any honest man who can read the New Testament ask himself whether Jesus and his immediate friends and disciples can be dishonoured more grossly than by the supposition that they said and did that which is attributed to them ; while, in reality, they disbelieved in Satan and his demons, in possession and in exorcism ? ¹

An eminent theologian has justly observed that we have no right to look at the propositions of the Christian faith with one eye open and the other shut. (Tract 85, p. 29.) It really is not permissible to see, with one eye, that Jesus is affirmed to declare the personality and the Fatherhood of God, His loving providence and His accessibility to prayer ; and to shut the other to the no less definite teaching ascribed to Jesus, in regard to the personality and the misanthropy of the devil, his malignant watchfulness, and his subjection to exorcistic formulæ and rites. Jesus is made to say that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning" (John viii. 44) by the same authority as that upon which we depend for his asserted declaration that God is a spirit" (John iv. 24).

To those who admit the authority of the famous Vincentian dictum that the doctrine which has been held "always, everywhere, and by all" is to be received as authoritative, the demonology must possess a higher sanction than any other Christian dogma, except, perhaps, those of the Resurrection and of the Messiahship of Jesus ; for it would be difficult to name any other points of doctrine on

which the Nazarene does not differ from the Christian, and the different historical stages and contemporary subdivisions of Christianity from one another. And, if the demonology is accepted, there can be no reason for rejecting all those miracles in which demons play a part. The Gadarene story fits into the general scheme of Christianity ; and the evidence for "Legion" and their doings is just as good as any other in the New Testament for the doctrine which the story illustrates.

It was with the purpose of bringing this great fact into prominence ; of getting people to open both their eyes when they look at Ecclesiasticism ; that I devoted so much space to that miraculous story which happens to be one of the best types of its class. And I could not wish for a better justification of the course I have adopted, than the fact that my heroically consistent adversary has declared his implicit belief in the Gadarene story and (by necessary consequence) in the Christian demonology as a whole. It must be obvious, by this time, that, if the account of the spiritual world given in the New Testament, professedly on the authority of Jesus, is true, then the demonological half of that account must be just as true as the other half. And, therefore, those who question the demonology, or try to explain it away, deny the truth of what Jesus said, and are, in ecclesiastical terminology, "Infidels" just as much as those who deny the spirituality of God. This is as plain as anything can well be, and the dilemma for my opponent was either to assert that the Gadarene pig-bedevilment actually occurred, or to write himself down an "Infidel." As was to be expected, he chose the former alternative ; and I may express my great satisfaction at finding that there is one spot of common ground on which both he and I stand. So far as I can judge, we are agreed to state one of the broad issues between the consequences of agnostic principles (as I draw them), and the consequences of ecclesiastical dogmatism (as he accepts it), as follows.

¹ See the expression of orthodox opinion upon the "accommodation" subterfuge already cited above, pp. 85 and 86.

Ecclesiasticism says: The demonology of the Gospels is an essential part of that account of that spiritual world, the truth of which it declares to be certified by Jesus.

Agnosticism (*me judice*) says: There is no good evidence of the existence of a demoniac spiritual world, and much reason for doubting it.

Hereupon the ecclesiastic may observe: Your doubt means that you disbelieve Jesus; therefore you are an "Infidel" instead of an "Agnostic." To which the agnostic may reply: No; for two reasons: first, because your evidence that Jesus said what you say he said is worth very little; and secondly, because a man may be an agnostic, in the sense of admitting he has no positive knowledge, and yet consider that he has more or less probable ground for accepting any given hypothesis about the spiritual world. Just as a man may frankly declare that he has no means of knowing whether the planets generally are inhabited or not, and yet may think one of the two possible hypotheses more likely than the other, so he may admit that he has no means of knowing anything about the spiritual world, and yet may think one or other of the current views on the subject, to some extent, probable.

The second answer is so obviously valid that it needs no discussion. I draw attention to it simply in justice to those agnostics who may attach greater value than I do to any sort of pneumatological speculations; and not because I wish to escape the responsibility of declaring that, whether Jesus sanctioned the demonological part of Christianity or not, I unhesitatingly reject it. The first answer, on the other hand, opens up the whole question of the claim of the biblical and other sources, from which hypotheses concerning the spiritual world are derived, to be regarded as unimpeachable historical evidence as to matters of fact.

Now, in respect of the trustworthiness of the Gospel narratives, I was anxious

to get rid of the common assumption that the determination of the authorship and of the dates of these works is a matter of fundamental importance. That assumption is based upon the notion that what contemporary witnesses say must be true, or, at least, has always a *prima facie* claim to be so regarded; so that if the writers of any of the Gospels were contemporaries of the events (and still more if they were in the position of eye-witnesses) the miracles they narrate must be historically true, and, consequently, the demonology which they involve must be accepted. But the story of the "Translation of the blessed martyrs Marcellinus and Petrus," and the other considerations (to which endless additions might have been made from the Fathers and the mediæval writers) set forth in a preceding essay, yield, in my judgment, satisfactory proof that, where the miraculous is concerned, neither considerable intellectual ability, nor undoubted honesty, nor knowledge of the world, nor proved faithfulness as civil historians, nor profound piety, on the part of eye-witnesses and contemporaries, affords any guarantee of the objective truth of their statements, when we know that a firm belief in the miraculous was ingrained in their minds, and was the pre-supposition of their observations and reasonings.

Therefore, although it be, as I believe, demonstrable that we have no real knowledge of the authorship, or of the date of composition of the Gospels, as they have come down to us, and that nothing better than more or less probable guesses can be arrived at on that subject, I have not cared to expend any space on the question. It will be admitted, I suppose, that the authors of the works attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whoever they may be, are personages whose capacity and judgment in the narration of ordinary events are not quite so well certified as those of Eginhard; and we have seen what the value of Eginhard's evidence is when the miraculous is in question.

I have been careful to explain that the arguments which I have used in the course of this discussion are not new; that they are historical and have nothing to do with what is commonly called science; and that they are all, to the best of my belief, to be found in the works of theologians of repute.

The position which I have taken up, that the evidence in favour of such miracles as those recorded by Eginhard, and consequently of mediæval demonology, is quite as good as that in favour of such miracles as the Gadarene, and consequently of Nazarene demonology, is none of my discovery. Its strength was, wittingly or unwittingly, suggested, a century and a half ago, by a theological scholar of eminence; and it has been, if not exactly occupied, yet so fortified with bastions and redoubts by a living ecclesiastical Vauban, that, in my judgment, it has been rendered impregnable. In the early part of the last century, the ecclesiastical mind in this country was much exercised by the question, not exactly of miracles, the occurrence of which in biblical times was axiomatic, but by the problem: When did miracles cease? Anglican divines were quite sure that no miracles had happened in their day, nor for some time past; they were equally sure that they happened sixteen or seventeen centuries earlier. And it was a vital question for them to determine at what point of time, between this *terminus a quo* and that *terminus ad quem*, miracles came to an end.

The Anglicans and the Romanists agreed in the assumption that the possession of the gift of miracle-working was *prima facie* evidence of the soundness of the faith of the miracle-workers. The supposition that miraculous powers might be wielded by heretics (though it might be supported by high authority) led to consequences too frightful to be entertained by people who were busied in building their dogmatic house on the sands of early Church history. If, as the Romanists maintained, an unbroken

series of genuine miracles adorned the records of their Church, throughout the whole of its existence, no Anglican could lightly venture to accuse them of doctrinal corruption. Hence, the Anglicans, who indulged in such accusations, were bound to prove the modern, the mediæval Roman, and the later Patristic, miracles false; and to shut off the wonder-working power from the Church at the exact point of time when Anglican doctrine ceased and Roman doctrine began. With a little adjustment—a squeeze here and a pull there—the Christianity of the first three or four centuries might be made to fit, or seem to fit, pretty well into the Anglican scheme. So the miracles, from Justin say to Jerome, might be recognised; while, in later times, the Church having become “corrupt”—that is to say, having pursued one and the same line of development further than was pleasing to Anglicans—its alleged miracles must needs be shams and impostures.

Under these circumstances, it may be imagined that the establishment of a scientific frontier between the earlier realm of supposed fact and the later of asserted delusion, had its difficulties; and torrents of theological special pleading about the subject flowed from clerical pens; until that learned and acute Anglican divine, Conyers Middleton, in his “Free Inquiry,” tore the sophistical web they had laboriously woven to pieces, and demonstrated that the miracles of of the patristic age, early and late, must stand or fall together, inasmuch as the evidence for the later is just as good as the evidence for the earlier wonders. If the one set are certified by contemporaneous witnesses of high repute, so are the other; and, in point of probability, there is not a pin to choose between the two. That is the solid and irrefragable result of Middleton’s contribution to the subject. But the Free Inquirer’s freedom had its limits; and he draws a sharp line of demarcation between the patristic and the New Testament miracles—on the professed ground

that the accounts of the latter, being inspired, are out of the reach of criticism.

A century later, the question was taken up by another divine, Middleton's equal in learning and acuteness, and far his superior in subtlety and dialectic skill; who, though an Anglican, scorned the name of Protestant; and, while yet a Churchman, made it his business, to parade, with infinite skill, the utter hollowness of the arguments of those of his brother Churchmen who dreamed that they could be both Anglicans and Protestants. The argument of the "Essay on the Miracles recorded in the Ecclesiastical History of the Early Ages"¹ by the present [1889] Roman Cardinal, but then Anglican Doctor, John Henry Newman, is compendiously stated by himself in the following passage:—

If the miracles of Church history cannot be defended by the arguments of Leslie, Lyttelton, Paley, or Douglas, how many of the Scripture miracles satisfy their conditions? (P. cvii.)

And, although the answer is not given in so many words, little doubt is left on the mind of the reader, that in the mind of the writer, it is: None. In fact, this conclusion is one which cannot be resisted, if the argument in favour of the Scripture miracles is based upon that which laymen, whether lawyers, or men of science, or historians, or ordinary men of affairs, call evidence. But there is something really impressive in the magnificent contempt with which, at times, Dr. Newman sweeps aside alike those who offer and those who demand such evidence.

Some infidel authors advise us to accept no miracles which would not have a verdict in their favour in a court of justice; that is, they employ against Scripture a weapon which Protestants would confine to attacks upon the Church; as if

¹ I quote the first edition (1843). A second edition appeared in 1870. Tract 85 of the *Tracts for the Times* should be read with this *Essay*. If I were called upon to compile a Primer of "Infidelity," I think I should save myself trouble by making a selection from these works, and from the *Essay on Development* by the same author.

moral and religious questions required legal proof, and evidence were the test of truth¹ (p. cvii).

"As if evidence were the test of truth!"—although the truth in question is the occurrence, or the non-occurrence, of certain phenomena at a certain time and in a certain place. This sudden revelation of the great gulf fixed between the ecclesiastical and the scientific mind is enough to take away the breath of any one unfamiliar with the clerical organon. As if, one may retort, the assumption that miracles may, or have, served a moral or a religious end, in any way alters the fact that they profess to be historical events, things that actually happened; and, as such, must needs be exactly those subjects about which evidence is appropriate and legal proofs (which are such merely because they afford adequate evidence) may be justly demanded. The Gadarene miracle either happened, or it did not. Whether the Gadarene "question" is moral or religious, or not, has nothing to do with the fact that it is a purely historical question whether the demons said what they are declared to have said, and the devil-possessed pigs did, or did not, rush over the heights bounding the Lake of Gennesaret on a certain day of a certain year, after A.D. 26 and before A.D. 36: for vague and uncertain as New Testament chronology is, I suppose it may be assumed that the event in question, if it happened at all, took place during the procuratorship of Pilate. If that is not a matter about which evidence ought to be required, and not only legal, but strict scientific proof demanded by sane men who are asked to believe the story—what is? Is a reasonable being to be seriously asked to credit statements, which, to put the case gently, are not exactly probable, and on the acceptance or rejection of which his whole view of life may depend, without

¹ Yet, when it suits his purpose, as in the Introduction to the *Essay on Development*, Dr. Newman can demand strict evidence in religious questions as sharply as any "infidel author"; and he can even profess to yield to its force (*Essay on Miracles*, 1870; note, p. 391).

asking for as much "legal" proof as would send an alleged pickpocket to gaol, or as would suffice to prove the validity of a disputed will?

"Infidel authors" (if, as I am assured, I may answer for them) will decline to waste time on mere darkenings of counsel of this sort; but to those Anglicans who accept his premises, Dr. Newman is a truly formidable antagonist. What, indeed, are they to reply when he puts the very pertinent question:—

whether persons who not merely question, but prejudge the Ecclesiastical miracles on the ground of their want of resemblance, whatever that be, to those contained in Scripture—as if the Almighty could not do in the Christian Church what He had not already done at the time of its foundation, or under the Mosaic Covenant—whether such reasoners are not siding with the sceptic,

and

whether it is not a happy inconsistency by which they continue to believe the Scriptures while they reject the Church¹ (p. liii).

Again, I invite Anglican orthodoxy to consider this passage:—

the narrative of the combats of St. Antony with evil spirits, is a development rather than a contradiction of revelation, viz. of such texts as speak of Satan being cast out by prayer and fasting. To be shocked, then, at the miracles of Ecclesiastical history, or to ridicule them for their strangeness, is no part of a scriptural philosophy (pp. liii–liv).

Further on, Dr. Newman declares that it has been admitted

that a distinct line can be drawn in point of character and circumstance between the miracles of Scripture and of Church history; but this is by no means the case (p. lv). . . . specimens are not wanting in the history of the Church, of miracles as awful in their character and as momentous in their effects as those which are recorded in Scripture. The fire interrupting the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, and the death of Arius, are instances, in Ecclesiastical history, of such solemn events. On the other hand, difficult instances in the Scripture history are such as these: the serpent in Eden, the Ark, Jacob's vision for the multiplication of his cattle, the speaking of Balaam's ass, the axe swimming

at Elisha's word, the miracle on the swine, and various instances of prayers or prophecies, in which, as in that of Noah's blessing and curse, words which seem the result of private feeling are expressly or virtually ascribed to a Divine suggestion (p. lvi).

Who is to gainsay our ecclesiastical authority here? "Infidel authors" might be accused of a wish to ridicule the Scripture miracles by putting them on a level with the remarkable story about the fire which stopped the rebuilding of the Temple, or that about the death of Arius—but Dr. Newman is above suspicion. The pity is that his list of what he delicately terms "difficult" instances is so short. Why omit the manufacture of Eve out of Adam's rib, on the strict historical accuracy of which the chief argument of the defenders of an iniquitous portion of our present marriage law depends? Why leave out the account of the "Bene Elohim" and their gallantries, on which a large part of the worst practices of the mediæval inquisitors into witchcraft was based? Why forget the angel who wrestled with Jacob, and, as the account suggests, somewhat over-stepped the bound of fair play, at the end of the struggle? Surely, we must agree with Dr. Newman that, if all these camels have gone down, it savours of affectation to strain at such gnats as the sudden ailment of Arius in the midst of his deadly, if prayerful,¹ enemies; and the fiery explosion which stopped the Julian building operations. Though the *words* of the "Conclusion"

According to Dr. Newman, "This prayer [that of Bishop Alexander, who begged God to 'take Arius away'] is said to have been offered about 3 P.M. on the Saturday; that same evening Arius was in the great square of Constantine, when he was suddenly seized with indisposition" (p. clxx). The "infidel" Gibbon seems to have dared to suggest that "an option between poison and miracle" is presented by this case; and, it must be admitted, that, if the Bishop had been within the reach of a modern police magistrate, things might have gone hardly with him. Modern "Infidels," possessed of a slight knowledge of chemistry, are not unlikely, with no less audacity, to suggest an "option between fire-damp and miracle" in seeking for the cause of the fiery outburst at Jerusalem.

¹ Compare Tract 85, p. 110; "I am persuaded that were men but consistent who oppose the Church doctrines as being unscriptural, they would vindicate the Jews for rejecting the Gospel."

of the "Essay on Miracles" may, perhaps, be quoted against me, I may express my satisfaction at finding myself in substantial accordance with a theologian above all suspicion of heterodoxy. With all my heart, I can declare my belief that there is just as good reason for believing in the miraculous slaying of the man who fell short of the Athanasian power of affirming contradictories, with respect to the nature of the Godhead, as there is for believing in the stories of the serpent and the ark told in Genesis, the speaking of Balaam's ass in Numbers, or the floating of the axe, at Elisha's order, in the second book of Kings.

It is one of the peculiarities of a really sound argument that it is susceptible of the fullest development; and that it sometimes leads to conclusions unexpected by those who employ it. To my mind, it is impossible to refuse to follow Dr. Newman when he extends his reasoning, from the miracles of the patristic and mediæval ages backward in time, as far as miracles are recorded. But, if the rules of logic are valid, I feel compelled to extend the argument forwards to the alleged Roman miracles of the present day, which Dr. Newman might not have admitted, but which Cardinal Newman may hardly reject. Beyond question, there is as good, or perhaps better, evidence of the miracles worked by our Lady of Lourdes, as there is for the floating of Elisha's axe, or the speaking of Balaam's ass. But we must go still further; there is a modern system of thaumaturgy and demonology which is just as well certified as the ancient.¹ Veracious, excellent,

¹ A writer in a spiritualist journal takes me roundly to task for venturing to doubt the historical and literal truth of the Gadarene story. The following passage in his letter is worth quotation: "Now to the materialistic and scientific mind, to the uninitiated in spiritual verities, certainly this story of the Gadarene or Gergesene swine presents insurmountable difficulties; it seems grotesque and nonsensical. To the experienced, trained, and cultivated Spiritualist

sometimes learned and acute persons, even philosophers of no mean pretensions, testify to the "levitation" of bodies much heavier than Elisha's axe; to the existence of "spirits" who, to the mere tactile sense, have been indistinguishable from flesh and blood; and, occasionally, have wrestled with all the vigour of Jacob's opponent; yet, further, to the speech, in the language of raps, of spiritual beings, whose discourses, in point of coherence and value, are far inferior to that of Balaam's humble but sagacious steed. I have not the smallest doubt that, if these were persecuting times, there is many a worthy "spiritualist" who would cheerfully go to the stake in support of his pneumatological faith; and furnish evidence, after Paley's own heart, in proof of the truth of his doctrines. Not a few modern divines, doubtless struck by the impossibility of refusing the spiritualist evidence, if the ecclesiastical evidence is accepted, and deprived of any *a priori* objection by their implicit belief in Christian Demonology, show themselves ready to take poor Sludge seriously, and to believe that he is possessed by other devils than those of need, greed, and vainglory.

Under these circumstances, it was to be expected, though it is none the less interesting to note the fact, that the arguments of the latest school of "spiritualists" present a wonderful family likeness to those which adorn the subtle disquisitions of the advocate

this miracle is, as I am prepared to show, one of the most instructive, the most profoundly useful, and the most beneficent which Jesus ever wrought in the whole course of His pilgrimage of redemption on earth." Just so. And the first page of this same journal presents the following advertisement, among others of the same kidney:—

"TO WEALTHY SPIRITUALISTS.—A Lady Medium of tried power wishes to meet with an elderly gentleman who would be willing to give her a comfortable home and maintenance in Exchange for her Spiritualistic services, as her guides consider her health is too delicate for public sittings: London preferred.—Address 'Mary,' Office of *Light*."

Are we going back to the days of the Judges, when wealthy Micah set up his private ephod, teraphim, and Levite?

of ecclesiastical miracles of forty years ago. It is unfortunate for the "spiritualists" that, over and over again, celebrated and trusted media, who really, in some respects, call to mind the Montanist¹ and gnostic seers of the second century, are either proved in courts of law to be fraudulent impostors; or, in sheer weariness, as it would seem, of the honest dupes who swear by them, spontaneously confess their long-continued iniquities, as the Fox women did the other day in New York.² But, whenever a catastrophe of this kind takes place, the believers are no wise dismayed by it. They freely admit that not only the media, but the spirits whom they summon, are sadly apt to lose sight of the elementary principles of right and wrong; and they triumphantly ask: How does the occurrence of occasional impostures disprove the genuine manifestations (that is to say, all those which have not yet been proved to be impostures or delusions)? And, in this, they unconsciously plagiarise from the churchman, who just as freely admits that many ecclesiastical miracles may have been forged; and asks, with calm contempt, not only of legal proofs, but of common-sense probability, Why does it follow that none are to be supposed genuine? I must say, however, that the spiritualists, so far as I know, do not venture to outrage right reason so boldly as the ecclesiastics. They do not sneer at "evidence"; nor repudiate

the requirement of legal proofs. In fact, there can be no doubt that the spiritualists produce better evidence for their manifestations than can be shown either for the miraculous death of Arius, or for the Invention of the Cross.¹

From the "levitation" of the axe at one end of a period of near three thousand years to the "levitation" of Sludge & Co. at the other end, there is a complete continuity of the miraculous, with every gradation, from the childish to the stupendous, from the gratification of a caprice to the illustration of sublime truth. There is no drawing a line in the series that might be set out of plausibly attested cases of spiritual intervention. If one is true, all may be true; if one is false, all may be false.

This is, to my mind, the inevitable result of that method of reasoning which is applied to the confutation of Protestantism, with so much success, by one of the acutest and subtlest disputants who have ever championed Ecclesiasticism—and one cannot put his claims to acuteness and subtlety higher.

. . . the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth it is this. . . . "To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."²

I have not a shadow of doubt that these anti-Protestant epigrams are profoundly true. But I have as little that, in the same sense, the "Christianity of history is not" Romanism; and that to be deeper in history is to cease to be a Romanist. The reasons which compel my doubts about the compatibility of the Roman doctrine, or any other form

¹ Dr. Newman's observation that the miraculous multiplication of the pieces of the true cross (with which "the whole world is filled," according to Cyril of Jerusalem; and of which some say there are enough extant to build a man-of-war) is no more wonderful than that of the loaves and fishes, is one that I do not see my way to contradict. See *Essay on Miracles*, 2d ed. p. 163.

² *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, by J. H. Newman, D.D., pp. 7 and 8. (1878.)

¹ Consider Tertullian's "sister" ("hodie apud nos"), who conversed with angels, saw and heard mysteries, knew men's thoughts, and prescribed medicine for their bodies (*De Anima*. cap. 9). Tertullian tells us that this woman saw the soul as corporeal, and described its colour and shape. The "infidel" will probably be unable to refrain from insulting the memory of the ecstatic saint by the remark, that Tertullian's known views about the corporeality of the soul may have had something to do with the remarkable perceptive powers of the Montanist medium, in whose revelations of the spiritual world he took such profound interest.

² See the *New York World* for Sunday, 21st October, 1888; and the *Report of the Seybert Commission* Philadelphia, 1887.

of Catholicism, with history, arise out of exactly the same line of argument as that adopted by Dr. Newman in the famous essay which I have just cited. If, with one hand, Dr. Newman has destroyed Protestantism, he has annihilated Romanism with the other; and the total result of his ambidextral efforts is to shake Christianity to its foundations. Nor was any one better aware that this must be the inevitable result of his arguments—if the world should refuse to accept Roman doctrines and Roman miracles—than the writer of Tract 85.

Dr. Newman made his choice and passed over to the Roman Church half a century ago. Some of those who were essentially in harmony with his views preceded, and many followed him. But many remained; and, as the quondam Puseyite and present Ritualistic party, they are continuing that work of sapping and mining the Protestantism of the Anglican Church which he and his friends so ably commenced. At the present time, they have no little claim to be considered victorious all along the line. I am old enough to recollect the small beginnings of the Tractarian party; and I am amazed when I consider the present position of their heirs. Their little leaven has leavened, if not the whole, yet a very large lump of the Anglican Church; which is now pretty much of a preparatory school for Papistry. So that it really behoves Englishmen (who, as I have been informed by high authority, are all legally members of the State Church, if they profess to belong to no other sect) to wake up to what that powerful organisation is about, and whither it is tending. On this point, the writings of Dr. Newman, while he still remained within the Anglican fold, are a vast store of the best and the most authoritative information. His doctrines on Ecclesiastical miracles and on Development are the corner-stones of the Tractarian fabric. He believed that his arguments led either Romeward, or to what ecclesiastics call "Infidelity," and I call Agnosticism.

I believe that he was quite right in this conviction; but while he chooses the one alternative, I choose the other; as he rejects Protestantism on the ground of its incompatibility with history, so, *a fortiori*, I conceive that Romanism ought to be rejected; and that an impartial consideration of the evidence must refuse the authority of Jesus to anything more than the Nazarenism of James and Peter and John. And let it not be supposed that this is a mere "infidel" perversion of the facts. No one has more openly and clearly admitted the possibility that they may be fairly interpreted in this way than Dr. Newman. If, he says, there are texts which seem to show that Jesus contemplated the evangelisation of the heathen:

. . . Did not the Apostles hear our Lord? and what was *their* impression from what they heard? Is it not certain that the Apostles did not gather this truth from His teaching? (Tract 85, p. 63.)

He said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." These words *need* have only meant "Bring all men to Christianity through Judaism." Make them Jews, that they may enjoy Christ's privileges, which are lodged in Judaism; teach them those rites and ceremonies, circumcision and the like, which hitherto have been dead ordinances, and now are living: and so the Apostles seem to have understood them (*ibid.* p. 65).

So far as Nazarenism differentiated itself from contemporary orthodox Judaism, it seems to have tended towards a revival of the ethical and religious spirit of the prophetic age, accompanied by the belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and by various accretions which had grown round Judaism subsequently to the exile. To these belong the doctrines of the Resurrection, of the Last Judgment, of Heaven and Hell; of the hierarchy of good angels; of Satan and the hierarchy of evil spirits. And there is very strong ground for believing that all these doctrines, at least in the shapes in which they were held by the post-exilic Jews, were derived from Persian and Babylonian¹ sources, and are essentially of heathen origin.

¹ Dr. Newman faces this question with his customary ability. "Now, I own, I am not at

How far Jesus positively sanctioned all these indrainings of circumjacent Paganism into Judaism; how far any one has a right to declare that the refusal to accept one or other of these doctrines, as ascertained verities, comes to the same thing as contradicting Jesus, it appears to me not easy to say. But it is hardly less difficult to conceive that he could have distinctly negatived any of them; and, more especially, that demonology which has been accepted by the Christian Churches, in every age and under all their mutual antagonisms. But I repeat my conviction that, whether Jesus sanctioned the demonology of his time and nation or not, it is doomed. The future of Christianity, as a dogmatic system and apart from the old Israelitish ethics which it has appropriated and developed, lies in the answer which mankind will eventually give to the question, whether they are prepared to believe such stories as the Gadarene and the pneumatological hypotheses which go with it, or not. My belief is they will decline to do anything of the sort, whenever and wherever their minds have been disciplined by science. And that discipline must, and will, at once follow and lead the footsteps of advancing civilisation.

The preceding pages were written before I became acquainted with the contents of the May number of the *Nineteenth Century*, wherein I discover many things which are decidedly not to my advantage. It would appear that "evasion" is my chief resource, "incapacity for strict argument" and "rottenness of ratiocination" my main mental characteristics, and that it is "barely credible" that a statement

all solicitous to deny that this doctrine of an apostate Angel and his hosts was gained from Babylon: it might still be Divine nevertheless. God who made the prophet's ass speak, and thereby instructed the prophet, might instruct His Church by means of heathen Babylon" (Tract 85, p. 83). There seems to be no end to the apologetic burden that Balaam's ass can carry.

which I profess to make of my own knowledge is true. All which things I notice, merely to illustrate the great truth, forced on me by long experience, that it is only from those who enjoy the blessing of a firm hold of the Christian faith that such manifestations of meekness, patience, and charity are to be expected.

I had imagined that no one who had read my preceding papers, could entertain a doubt as to my position in respect of the main issue, as it has been stated and restated by my opponent:

an Agnosticism which knows nothing of the relation of man to God must not only refuse belief to our Lord's most undoubted teaching, but must deny the reality of the spiritual convictions in which He lived.¹

That is said to be "the simple question which is at issue between us," and the three testimonies to that teaching and those convictions selected are the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the Story of the Passion.

My answer, reduced to its briefest form, has been: In the first place, the evidence is such that the exact nature of the teachings and the convictions of Jesus is extremely uncertain; so that what ecclesiastics are pleased to call a denial of them may be nothing of the kind. And, in the second place, if Jesus taught the demonological system involved in the Gadarene story—if a belief in that system formed a part of the spiritual convictions in which he lived and died—then I, for my part, unhesitatingly refuse belief in that teaching, and deny the reality of those spiritual convictions. And I go further and add, that, exactly in so far as it can be proved that Jesus sanctioned the essentially pagan demonological theories current among the Jews of his age, exactly in so far, for me, will his authority in any matter touching the spiritual world be weakened.

With respect to the first half of my answer, I have pointed out that the Sermon on the Mount, as given in the

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, May 1889 (p. 701).

first Gospel, is, in the opinion of the best critics, a "mosaic work" of materials derived from different sources, and I do not understand that this statement is challenged. The only other Gospel—the third—which contains something like it, makes, not only the discourse, but the circumstances under which it was delivered, very different. Now, it is one thing to say that there was something real at the bottom of the two discourses—which is quite possible; and another to affirm that we have any right to say what that something was, or to fix upon any particular phrase and declare it to be a genuine utterance. Those who pursue theology as a science, and bring to the study an adequate knowledge of the ways of ancient historians, will find no difficulty in providing illustrations of my meaning. I may supply one which has come within range of my own limited vision.

In Josephus's "History of the Wars of the Jews" (chap. xix.), that writer reports a speech which he says Herod made at the opening of a war with the Arabians. It is in the first person, and would naturally be supposed by the reader to be intended for a true version of what Herod said. In the "Antiquities," written some seventeen years later, the same writer gives another report, also in the first person, of Herod's speech on the same occasion. This second oration is twice as long as the first and, though the general tenor of the two speeches is pretty much the same, there is hardly any verbal identity, and a good deal of matter is introduced into the one, which is absent from the other. Josephus prides himself on his accuracy; people whose fathers might have heard Herod's oration were his contemporaries; and yet his historical sense is so curiously undeveloped that he can, quite innocently, perpetrate an obvious literary fabrication; for one of the two accounts must be incorrect. Now, if I am asked whether I believe that Herod made some particular statement on this occasion; whether, for

example, he uttered the pious aphorism, "Where God is, there is both multitude and courage," which is given in the "Antiquities," but not in the "Wars," I am compelled to say I do not know. One of the two reports must be erroneous, possibly both are: at any rate, I cannot tell how much of either is true. And, if some fervent admirer of the Idumean should build up a theory of Herod's piety upon Josephus's evidence that he propounded the aphorism, is it a "mere evasion" to say, in reply, that the evidence that he did utter it is worthless?

It appears again that, adopting the tactics of Conachar when brought face to face with Hal o' the Wynd, I have been trying to get my simple-minded adversary to follow me on a wild-goose chase through the early history of Christianity, in the hope of escaping impending defeat on the main issue. But I may be permitted to point out that there is an alternative hypothesis which equally fits the facts; and that, after all, there may have been method in the madness of my supposed panic.

For suppose it to be established that Gentile Christianity was a totally different thing from the Nazarenism of Jesus and his immediate disciples; suppose it to be demonstrable that, as early as the sixth decade of our era at least, there were violent divergencies of opinion among the followers of Jesus; suppose it to be hardly doubtful that the Gospels and the Acts took their present shapes under the influence of those divergencies; suppose that their authors, and those through whose hands they passed, had notions of historical veracity not more eccentric than those which Josephus occasionally displays: surely the chances that the Gospels are altogether trustworthy records of the teachings of Jesus become very slender. And, since the whole of the case of the other side is based on the supposition that they are accurate records (especially of speeches, about which ancient historians are so curiously loose), I

really do venture to submit that this part of my argument bears very seriously on the main issue ; and, as ratiocination, is sound to the core.

Again, when I passed by the topic of the speeches of Jesus on the Cross, it appears that I could have had no other motive than the dictates of my native evasiveness. An ecclesiastical dignitary may have respectable reasons for declining a fencing match "in sight of Gethsemane and Calvary"; but an ecclesiastical "Infidel"! Never. It is obviously impossible that, in the belief that "the greater includes the less," I, having declared the Gospel evidence in general, as to the sayings of Jesus, to be of questionable value, thought it needless to select for illustration of my views, those particular instances which were likely to be most offensive to persons of another way of thinking. But any supposition that may have been entertained that the old familiar tones of the ecclesiastical war-drum will tempt me to engage in such needless discussion had better be renounced. I shall do nothing of the kind. Let it suffice that I ask my readers to turn to the twenty-third chapter of Luke (revised version), verse thirty-four, and he will find in the margin

Some ancient authorities omit: And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So that, even as late as the fourth century, there were ancient authorities, indeed some of the most ancient and weightiest, who either did not know of this utterance, so often quoted as characteristic of Jesus, or did not believe it had been uttered.

Many years ago, I received an anonymous letter, which abused me heartily for my want of moral courage in not speaking out. I thought that one of the oddest charges an anonymous letter-writer could bring. But I am not sure that the plentiful sowing of the pages of the article with which I am dealing with accusations of evasion, may not

seem odder to those who consider that the main strength of the answers with which I have been favoured (in this review and elsewhere) is devoted, not to anything in the text of my first paper, but to a note which occurs at p. 84. In this I say :

Dr. Wace tells us : "It may be asked how far we can rely on the accounts we possess of our Lord's teaching on these subjects." And he seems to think the question appropriately answered by the assertion that it "ought to be regarded as settled by M. Renan's practical surrender of the adverse case."

I requested Dr. Wace to point out the passages of M. Renan's works in which, as he affirms, this "practical surrender" (not merely as to the age and authorship of the Gospels, be it observed, but as to their historical value) is made, and he has been so good as to do so. Now let us consider the parts of Dr. Wace's citation from Renan which are relevant to the issue :—

The author of this Gospel [Luke] is certainly the same as the author of the Acts of the Apostles. Now the author of the Acts seems to be a companion of St. Paul—a character which accords completely with St. Luke. I know that more than one objection may be opposed to this reasoning : but one thing, at all events, is beyond doubt, namely, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is a man who belonged to the second apostolic generation ; and this suffices for our purpose.

This is a curious "practical surrender of the adverse case." M. Renan thinks that there is no doubt that the author of the third Gospel is the author of the Acts—a conclusion in which I suppose critics generally agree. He goes on to remark that this person *seems* to be a companion of St. Paul, and adds that Luke was a companion of St. Paul. Then, somewhat needlessly, M. Renan points out that there is more than one objection to jumping, from such data as these, to the conclusion that "Luke" is the writer of the third Gospel. And, finally, M. Renan is content to reduce that which is "beyond doubt" to the fact that the author of the two books is a man of the second apostolic generation. Well, it seems to me that I could agree

with all that M. Renan considers "beyond doubt" here, without surrendering anything, either "practically" or theoretically.

Dr. Wace (*Nineteenth Century*, March, p. 363) states that he derives the above citation from the preface to the 15th edition of the "Vie de Jésus." My copy of "Les Évangiles," dated 1877, contains a list of Renan's "Œuvres Complètes," at the head of which I find "Vie de Jésus," 15^e édition. It is, therefore, a later work than the edition of the "Vie de Jésus" which Dr. Wace quotes. Now "Les Évangiles," as its name implies, treats fully of the questions respecting the date and authorship of the Gospels; and any one who desired, not merely to use M. Renan's expressions for controversial purposes, but to give a fair account of his views in their full significance, would, I think, refer to the later source.

If this course had been taken, Dr. Wace might have found some as decided expressions of opinion, in favour of Luke's authorship of the third Gospel, as he has discovered in "The Apostles." I mention this circumstance, because I desire to point out that, taking even the strongest of Renan's statements, I am still at a loss to see how it justifies that large-sounding phrase, "practical surrender of the adverse case." For, on p. 438 of "Les Évangiles," Renan speaks of the way in which Luke's "excellent intentions" have led him to torture history in the Acts; he declares Luke to be the founder of that "eternal fiction which is called ecclesiastical history"; and, on the preceding page, he talks of the "myth" of the Ascension—with its "*mise en scène voulue*." At p. 435, I find "Luc, ou l'auteur quel qu'il soit du troisième Évangile"; at p. 280, the accounts of the Passion, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, are said to be "peu historiques"; at p. 283, "La valeur historique du troisième Évangile est sûrement moindre que celles des deux premiers." A Pyrrhic sort of victory for orthodoxy, this "surrender"!

And, all the while, the scientific student of theology knows that, the more reason there may be to believe that Luke was the companion of Paul, the more doubtful becomes his credibility, if he really wrote the Acts. For, in that case, he could not fail to have been acquainted with Paul's account of the Jerusalem conference, and he must have consciously misrepresented it.

We may next turn to the essential part of Dr. Wace's citation (*Nineteenth Century*, p. 365) touching the first Gospel:—

St. Matthew evidently deserves peculiar confidence for the discourses. Here are the "oracles"—the very notes taken while the memory of the instruction of Jesus was living and definite.

M. Renan here expresses the very general opinion as to the existence of a collection of "logia," having a different origin from the text in which they are embedded, in Matthew. "Notes" are somewhat suggestive of a shorthand writer, but the suggestion is unintentional, for M. Renan assumes that these "notes" were taken, not at the time of the delivery of the "logia" but subsequently, while (as he assumes) the memory of them was living and definite; so that, in this very citation, M. Renan leaves open the question of the general historical value of the first Gospel; while it is obvious that the accuracy of "notes" taken, not at the time of delivery, but from memory, is a matter about which more than one opinion may be fairly held. Moreover, Renan expressly calls attention to the difficulty of distinguishing the authentic "logia" from later additions of the same kind ("Les Évangiles," p. 201). The fact is, there is no contradiction here to that opinion about the first Gospel which is expressed in "Les Évangiles" (p. 175).

The text of the so-called Matthew supposes the pre-existence of that of Mark, and does little more than complete it. He completes it in two fashions—first, by the insertion of those long discourses which gave their chief value to the Hebrew Gospels; then by adding traditions of a more modern formation, results of successive

developments of the legend, and to which the Christian consciousness already attached infinite value.

M. Renan goes on to suggest that besides "Mark," "Pseudo-Matthew" used an Aramaic version of the Gospel, originally set forth in that dialect. Finally, as to the second Gospel (*Nineteenth Century*, p. 365):—

He [Mark] is full of minute observations, proceeding, beyond doubt, from an eye-witness. There is nothing to conflict with the supposition that this eye-witness . . . was the Apostle Peter himself, as Papias has it.

Let us consider this citation by the light of "Les Évangiles":—

This work, although composed after the death of Peter, was, in a sense, the work of Peter; it represents the way in which Peter was accustomed to relate the life of Jesus (p. 116).

M. Renan goes on to say that, as an historical document, the Gospel of Mark has a great superiority (p. 116); but Mark has a motive for omitting the discourses, and he attaches a "puerile importance" to miracles (p. 117). The Gospel of Mark is less a legend, than a biography written with credulity (p. 118). It would be rash to say that Mark has not been interpolated and retouched (p. 120).

If any one thinks that I have not been warranted in drawing a sharp distinction between "scientific theologians" and "counsels for creeds"; or that my warning against the too ready acceptance of certain declarations as to the state of biblical criticism was needless; or that my anxiety as to the sense of the word "practical" was superfluous; let him compare the statement that M. Renan has made a "practical surrender of the adverse case" with the facts just set forth. For what is the adverse case? The question, as Dr. Wace puts it, is "It may be asked how far can we rely on the accounts we possess of our Lord's teaching on these subjects." It will be obvious that M. Renan's statements amount to an adverse answer—to a "practical" denial that any great reliance can be placed on these accounts. He does not

believe that Matthew, the apostle, wrote the first Gospel; he does not profess to know who is responsible for the collection of "logia," or how many of them are authentic; though he calls the second Gospel the most historical, he points out that it is written with credulity, and may have been interpolated and retouched; and as to the author, "quel qu'il soit," of the third Gospel, who is to "rely on the accounts" of a writer, who deserves the cavalier treatment which "Luke" meets with at M. Renan's hands?

I repeat what I have already more than once said, that the question of the age and the authorship of the Gospels has not, in my judgment, the importance which is so commonly assigned to it; for the simple reason that the reports, even of eye-witnesses, would not suffice to justify belief in a large and essential part of their contents; on the contrary, these reports would discredit the witnesses. The Gadarene miracle, for example, is so extremely improbable that the fact of its being reported by three, even independent, authorities could not justify belief in it, unless we had the clearest evidence as to their capacity as observers and as interpreters of their observations. But it is evident that the three authorities are not independent; that they have simply adopted a legend, of which there were two versions; and instead of their proving its truth, it suggests their superstitious credulity: so that if "Matthew," "Mark," and "Luke" are really responsible for the Gospels, it is not the better for the Gadarene story, but the worse for them.

A wonderful amount of controversial capital has been made out of my assertion in the note to which I have referred, as an *obiter dictum* of no consequence to my argument, that if Renan's work¹ were non-extant, the main results of biblical criticism, as set forth in the works of Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and

¹ I trust it may not be supposed that I undervalue M. Renan's labours, or intended to speak slightly of them.

Volkmar, for example, would not be sensibly affected. I thought I had explained it satisfactorily already, but it seems that my explanation has only exhibited still more of my native perversity, so I ask for one more chance.

In the course of the historical development of any branch of science, what is universally observed is this: that the men who make epochs, and are the real architects of the fabric of exact knowledge, are those who introduce fruitful ideas or methods. As a rule, the man who does this pushes his idea, or his method, too far; or, if he does not, his school is sure to do so; and those who follow have to reduce his work to its proper value, and assign it its place in the whole. Not unfrequently, they, in their turn, overdo the critical process, and, in trying to eliminate error, throw away truth.

Thus, as I said, Linnæus, Buffon, Cuvier, Lamarck, really "set forth the results" of a developing science, although they often heartily contradict one another. Notwithstanding this circumstance, modern classificatory method and nomenclature have largely grown out of the work of Linnæus: the modern conception of biology, as a science, and of its relation to climatology, geography, and geology, are, as largely, rooted in the results of the labours of Buffon; comparative anatomy and palæontology owe a vast debt to Cuvier's results; while invertebrate zoology and the revival of the idea of evolution are intimately dependent on the results of the work of Lamarck. In other words, the main results of biology up to the early years of this century are to be found in, or spring out of, the works of these men.

So, if I mistake not, Strauss, if he did not originate the idea of taking the mythopœic faculty into account in the development of the Gospel narratives, and though he may have exaggerated the influence of that faculty, obliged scientific theology, hereafter, to take that element into serious consideration; so Baur, in giving prominence to the cardinal fact

of the divergence of the Nazarene and Pauline tendencies in the primitive Church; so Reuss, in setting a marvellous example of the cool and dispassionate application of the principles of scientific criticism over the whole field of Scripture; so Volkmar, in his clear and forcible statement of the Nazarene limitations of Jesus, contributed results of permanent value in scientific theology. I took these names as they occurred to me. Undoubtedly, I might have advantageously added to them; perhaps, I might have made a better selection. But it really is absurd to try to make out that I did not know that these writers widely disagree; and I believe that no scientific theologian will deny that, in principle, what I have said is perfectly correct. Ecclesiastical advocates, of course, cannot be expected to take this view of the matter. To them, these mere seekers after truth, in so far as their results are unfavourable to the creed the clerics have to support, are more or less "infidels," or favourers of "infidelity"; and the only thing they care to see, or probably can see, is the fact that, in a great many matters, the truth-seekers differ from one another, and therefore can easily be exhibited to the public, as if they did nothing else; as if any one who referred to their having, each and all, contributed his share to the results of theological science, was merely showing his ignorance; and as if a charge of inconsistency could be based on the fact that he himself often disagrees with what they say. I have never lent a shadow of foundation to the assumption that I am a follower of either Strauss, or Baur, or Reuss, or Volkmar, or Renan; my debt to these eminent men—so far my superiors in theological knowledge—is, indeed, great; yet it is not for their opinions, but for those I have been able to form for myself, by their help.

In *Agnosticism: a Rejoinder*, I have referred to the difficulties under which those professors of the science of theology, whose tenure of their posts depends on the results of their investi-

gations, must labour; and, in a note, I add—

Imagine that all our chairs of Astronomy had been founded in the fourteenth century, and that their incumbents were bound to sign Ptolemaic articles. In that case, with every respect for the efforts of persons thus hampered to attain and expound the truth, I think men of common sense would go elsewhere to learn astronomy.

I did not write this paragraph without a knowledge that its sense would be open to the kind of perversion which it has suffered; but, if that was clear, the necessity for the statement was still clearer. It is my deliberate opinion: I reiterate it; and I say that, in my judgment, it is extremely inexpedient that any subject which calls itself a science should be entrusted to teachers who are debarred from freely following out scientific methods to their legitimate conclusions, whatever those conclusions may be. If I may borrow a phrase paraded at the Church Congress, I think it "ought to be unpleasant" for any man of science to find himself in the position of such a teacher.

Human nature is not altered by seating it in a professorial chair, even of theology. I have very little doubt that if, in the year 1859, the tenure of my office had depended upon my adherence to the doctrines of Cuvier, the objections to them set forth in the "Origin of Species" would have had a halo of gravity about them that, being free to teach what I pleased, I failed to discover. And, in making that statement, it does not appear to me that I am confessing that I should have been debarred by "selfish interests" from making candid inquiry, or that I should have

been biassed by "sordid motives." I hope that even such a fragment of moral sense as may remain in an ecclesiastical "infidel" might have got me through the difficulty; but it would be unworthy to deny, or disguise, the fact that a very serious difficulty must have been created for me by the nature of my tenure. And let it be observed that the temptation, in my case, would have been far slighter than in that of a professor of theology; whatever biological doctrine I had repudiated, nobody I cared for would have thought the worse of me for so doing. No scientific journals would have howled me down, as the religious newspapers howled down my too honest friend, the late Bishop of Natal; nor would my colleagues of the Royal Society have turned their backs upon me, as his episcopal colleagues boycotted him.

I say these facts are obvious, and that it is wholesome and needful that they should be stated. It is in the interests of theology, if it be a science, and it is in the interests of those teachers of theology who desire to be something better than counsel for creeds, that it should be taken to heart. The seeker after theological truth and that only, will no more suppose that I have insulted him, than the prisoner who works in fetters will try to pick a quarrel with me, if I suggest that he would get on better if the fetters were knocked off; unless indeed, as it is said does happen in the course of long captivities, that the victim at length ceases to feel the weight of his chains, or even takes to hugging them, as if they were honourable ornaments.

ON AGNOSTICISM

REPLIES TO THE LATE
PROFESSOR HUXLEY, F.R.S.

BY
HENRY WACE, D.D.
DEAN OF CANTERBURY

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PREFACE

THE following Papers, mainly in reply to Professor Huxley, were, with others on kindred subjects, collected in a volume published by Messrs. Blackwood in 1894, entitled 'Christianity and Agnosticism, Reviews of some recent attacks on the Christian Faith,' and a second edition of this volume is still to be had. But the Essays on the subject by Professor Huxley have lately been republished in a cheap form, and it seemed desirable that the replies to them should be equally accessible. Messrs. Blackwood were accordingly asked to consent to the republication of that portion of the volume which deals with this particular controversy, and my best thanks are due to them for their kindness in giving their consent.

As my antagonist in this controversy has passed away, it seemed right to reprint the Essays without alteration or further argument, and I have only added one or two notes. I do not think, however, that the few years which have passed since the second edition of the volume was published have brought any facts or considerations to light which materially affect the questions at issue; and the quotation from Dr. Harnack's 'Chronologie der Altchristlichen Literatur,' published in 1897, which I have appended to the final Essay on the Historical Criticism of the New Testament, will show that, in the judgment of that eminent scholar, the view expressed in that Essay of the general results of recent German criticism—a view which was so peremptorily challenged by Professor Huxley—was substantially just. I could not have desired a more complete or authoritative confirmation of the main argument of these Essays on that point.

I will only repeat one observation from the Preface to the volume from which these Essays are reproduced. Professor Huxley did not feel himself able, in republishing his own Essays, to reprint any of the arguments to which he was replying; although "there is," he acknowledged, in his Preface to 'Controverted Questions,' "an air of unfairness about the presentation of only one side of a discussion." In the present reprint of my own articles, I have endeavoured, on my part, to obviate any such unfairness as far as possible, by giving in the notes the passages from Professor Huxley's articles to which my arguments refer. The reader, I hope, will thus find the case at issue placed fairly before him.

HENRY WACE.

St. Michael's, Cornhill, June 1902.

ON AGNOSTICISM

The following paper was read at the Manchester Church Congress in September 1888, and gave occasion for the articles by Professor Huxley to which the two following papers reply.

WHAT is Agnosticism? In the new Oxford Dictionary of the English Language we are told that "an Agnostic is one who holds that the existence of anything beyond and behind natural phenomena is unknown, and (so far as can be judged) unknowable, and especially that a First Cause and an unseen world are subjects of which we know nothing." The same authority quotes a letter from Mr. R. H. Hutton, stating that the word was suggested in his hearing, at a party held in 1869, by Professor Huxley, who took it from St. Paul's mention of the altar at Athens to the Unknown God. "Agnostic," it is further said, in a passage quoted from the 'Spectator' of June 11, 1876, "was the name demanded by Professor Huxley for those who disclaimed Atheism, and believed with him in an unknown and unknowable God,

or, in other words, that the ultimate origin of all things must be some cause unknown and unknowable."

Again, the late honoured Bishop of Manchester is quoted as saying, in the 'Manchester Guardian' in 1880, that "the Agnostic neither denied nor affirmed God. He simply put Him on one side." The designation was suggested, therefore, for the purpose of avoiding a direct denial of beliefs respecting God such as are asserted by our faith. It proceeds, also, from a scientific source, and claims the scientific merit, or habit, of reserving opinion respecting matters not known or proved.

Now, we are not here concerned with this doctrine as a mere question of abstract philosophy respecting the limits of our natural capacities. We have to consider it in relation to the Church and to Christianity, and the main consideration which it is the purpose of this paper to suggest is that, in this relation, the adoption of the term Agnostic is only an attempt to shift the issue, and that it in-

volves a mere evasion. A Christian catechism says : "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world ; secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind ; thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God." The Agnostic says, "How do you know all that? I consider I have no means of knowing these things you assert respecting God. I do not know, and cannot know, that God is a Father, and that He has a Son ; and I do not and cannot know that such a Father made me, or that such a Son redeemed me." But the Christian did not speak of what he knew, but of what he believed. The first word of a Christian is not "I know," but "I believe." He professes, not a science, but a faith ; and at baptism he accepts, not a theory, but a creed.

Now, it is true that in one common usage of the word, belief is practically equivalent to opinion. A man may say he believes in a scientific theory, meaning that he is strongly of opinion that it is true ; or, in still looser language, he may say he believes it is going to be a fine day. I would observe, in passing, that even in this sense of the word, a man who refused to act upon what he could not know would be a very unpractical person. If you are suffering from an obscure disease, you go to a doctor to

obtain, not his knowledge of your malady, but his opinion ; and upon that opinion, in defiance of other opinions, even an Emperor may have to stake his life. Similarly, from what is known of the proceedings in Parliament respecting the Manchester Ship Canal, it may be presumed that engineers were not unanimous as to the possibilities and advantages of that undertaking ; but Manchester men were content to act upon the best opinion, and to stake fortunes on their belief in it. However, it may be sufficient to have just alluded to the old and unanswered contention of Bishop Butler that, even if Christian belief and Christian duty were mere matters of probable opinion, a man who said in regard to them, "I do not know, and therefore I will not act," would be abandoning the first principle of human energy. He might be a philosopher ; but he would not be a man—not at least, I fancy, according to the standard of Lancashire.

But there is another sense of the word "belief," which is of far more importance for our present subject. There is belief which is founded on the assurances of another person, and upon our trust in him. This sort of belief is not opinion, but faith ; and it is this which has been the greatest force in creating religions, and through them in moulding civilisations. What made the Mahomedan world ? Trust and

faith in the declarations and assurances of Mahomet. And what made the Christian world? Trust and faith in the declarations and assurances of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. This is not mere believing about things; it is believing a man and believing in a man. Now, the point of importance for the present argument is, that the chief articles of the Christian creed are directly dependent on personal assurances and personal declarations, and that our acceptance of them depends on personal trust. Why do we believe that Jesus Christ redeemed all mankind? Because He said so. There is no other ultimate ground for it. The matter is not one open to the observation of our faculties; and as a matter of science we are not in a position to know it. The case is the same with His Divine Sonship and the office of His Spirit. He reveals Himself by His words and acts; and in revealing Himself He reveals His Father, and the Spirit who proceeds from both. His resurrection and His miracles afford us, as St. Paul says, assurance of His Divine mission. But for our knowledge of His offices in relation to mankind, and of His nature in relation to God, we rest on His own words, confirmed and explained by those of His Apostles. Who can dream of knowing, as a matter of science, that He is the Judge of quick and dead? But He speaks

Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, of that day when men will plead before Him, and when He will decide their fate; and Christians include in their creed a belief in that statement respecting the unseen and future world.

But if this be so, for a man to urge as an escape from this article of belief that he has no means of a scientific knowledge of the unseen world, or of the future, is irrelevant. His difference from Christians lies not in the fact that he has no knowledge of these things, but that he does not believe the authority on which they are stated. He may prefer to call himself an Agnostic; but his real name is an older one—he is an Infidel, that is to say, an unbeliever. The word Infidel, perhaps, carries an unpleasant significance. Perhaps it is right that it should. It is, and it ought to be, an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe Jesus Christ. It is, indeed, an awful thing to say. But even men who are not conscious of all it involves shrink from the ungraciousness, if from nothing more, of treating the beliefs inseparably associated with that Sacred Person as an illusion. This, however, is what is really meant by Agnosticism; and the time seems to have come when it is necessary to insist upon the fact.

Of course there may be numberless attempts at respectful excuses

or evasions, and there is one in particular which may require notice. It may be asked how far we can rely on the accounts we possess of our Lord's teaching on these subjects. Now, it is unnecessary for the general argument before us to enter on those questions respecting the authenticity of the Gospel narratives, which ought to be regarded as settled by M. Renan's practical surrender of the adverse case. Apart from all disputed points of criticism, no one practically doubts that our Lord lived, and that He died on the cross, in the most intense sense of filial relation to His Father in heaven, and that He bore testimony to that Father's providence, love, and grace towards mankind. The Lord's Prayer affords sufficient evidence upon these points. If the Sermon on the Mount alone be added, the whole unseen world, of which the Agnostic refuses to know anything, stands unveiled before us. There you see revealed the Divine Father and Creator of all things, in personal relation to His creatures, hearing their prayers, witnessing their actions, caring for them and rewarding them. There you hear of a future judgment administered by Christ Himself, and of a heaven to be hereafter revealed, in which those who live as the children of that Father, and who suffer in the cause and for the sake of Christ Himself, will be abundantly re-

warded. If Jesus Christ preached that sermon, made those promises, and taught that prayer, then any one who says that we know nothing of God, or of a future life, or of an unseen world, says that he does not believe Jesus Christ. Since the days when our Lord lived and taught, at all events, Agnosticism has been impossible without Infidelity.

Let it be observed, moreover, that to put the case in this way is not merely to make an appeal to authority. It goes further than that. It is in a vital respect an appeal to experience, and so far to science itself. It is an appeal to what I hope may be taken as, confessedly, the deepest and most sacred moral experience which has ever been known. No criticism worth mentioning doubts the story of the Passion; and that story involves the most solemn attestation, again and again, of truths of which an Agnostic coolly says he knows nothing. An Agnosticism which knows nothing of the relation of man to God must not only refuse belief to our Lord's most undoubted teaching, but must deny the reality of the spiritual convictions in which He lived and died. It must declare that His most intimate, most intense beliefs, and His dying aspirations, were an illusion. Is that supposition tolerable? It is because it is not tolerable that men would fain avoid facing it, and would

have themselves called Agnostics rather than Infidels; but I know not whether this cool and supercilious disregard of that solemn teaching, and of that sacred life and death, be not more offensive than the downright denials which look their responsibility boldly in the face, and say, not only that they do not know, but that they do not believe. This question of living faith in a living God and Saviour, with all it involves, is too urgent and momentous a thing to be put aside with a philosophical "I don't know." The best blood of the world has been shed over it; the deepest personal, social, and even political problems are still bound up with it. The intensest moral struggles of humanity have centred round this question; and it is really intolerable that all this bitter experience of men and women who have trusted and prayed, and suffered and died, in faith, should be set aside, as not germane to a philosophical argument.

But, to say the least, from a purely scientific point of view, there is a portentous fallacy in the manner in which, in Agnostic arguments, the testimony, not only of our Lord, but of Psalmists, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints, is disregarded. So far as the Christian faith can be treated as a scientific question, it is a question of experience; and what is to be said of a science which leaves out of account the most

conspicuous and most influential experience in the matter? One thing may be said with confidence: that it defeats itself, by disregarding the greatest force with which it has to contend. While philosophers are arguing as to the abstract capacities of human thought, as though our Lord had never lived and died, He Himself is still speaking; His words, as recorded by His Apostles and Evangelists, are still echoing over human hearts, touching their inmost affections, appealing to their deepest needs, commanding their profoundest trust, and awakening in them an apprehension of that Divine relation and those unseen realities in which their spirits live. While Agnostics are committing the enormous scientific, as well as moral, blunder of considering the relations of men to God and to an unseen world without taking His evidence into account, and then presuming to judge the faith He taught by their own partial knowledge, His voice is still heard, in penetrating and comfortable words, bidding men believe in God and believe also in Himself. He, after all, is the one sufficient answer to Agnosticism, and, I will take the liberty of adding, to Atheism and to Pessimism also—not merely His authority, though that would be enough, but His life, His soul, Himself.

Accordingly, as our object here is

to consider how to deal with these difficulties and objections, what these considerations would seem to point out is that we should take care to let Christ and Christ's own message be heard, and not to endure that they should be allowed to stand aside while a philosophical debate is proceeding. Philosophers are slow in these matters. They are still disputing, after some 2500 years of discussion, what is the true principle for determining moral right and wrong. Meanwhile, men have been content to live by the Ten Commandments, and the main lines of duty are plain. In the same way, religion has preceded the philosophy of religion; and men can be made sensible of their relation to God, whether it can be philo-

sophically explained or not. The Psalms, the Prophets, and, above all, the Gospels, are plain evidence, in matter of fact, that men are in relation to God and owe duties to Him. Let men be made to attend to the facts; let them hear those simple, plain, and earnest witnesses; above all, let them hear the voice of Christ, and they will at least believe, whatever may be the possibilities of knowledge. In a word, let us imitate St. Paul when his converts were perplexed by Greek philosophies at Corinth: "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

ON A DEFENCE OF AGNOSTICISM BY PROFESSOR HUXLEY

The preceding paper was the chief subject of an article by Professor Huxley, published in the 'Nineteenth Century' for February 1889, reprinted in vol. v. of the Professor's 'Collected Essays,' entitled 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 209, and reissued in another form in 1902. To that article the following reply was published in the 'Nineteenth Century' for March 1889. A few introductory observations of purely personal and temporary interest are omitted.

IT is a matter of justice to my cause and to myself to remove at once the unscientific and prejudiced representation of the case which Professor Huxley has put forward; and fortunately there will be no need of elaborate argument for this purpose. There is no occasion to go beyond Professor Huxley's own article and the language of my paper to exhibit his entire misapprehension of the point in dispute; while I am much more than content to rely for the invalidation of his own contentions upon the authorities he himself quotes.

What, then, is the position with which Professor Huxley finds fault? He is good enough to say that what he calls my "description" of

an Agnostic may for the present pass, so that we are so far, at starting, on common ground. The actual description of an Agnostic which is given in my paper is indeed distinct from the words he quotes, and is taken from an authoritative source. But what I have said is that, as an escape from such an article of Christian belief as that we have a Father in heaven, or that Jesus Christ is the Judge of quick and dead, and will hereafter return to judge the world, an Agnostic urges that "he has no means of attaining a scientific knowledge of the unseen world or of the future"; and I maintain that this plea is irrelevant. Christians do not presume to say that they have a scientific knowledge of such articles of their creed. They say that they believe them, and they believe them mainly on the assurances of Jesus Christ. Consequently their characteristic difference from an Agnostic consists in the fact that they believe those assurances, and that he does not. Professor Hux-

ley's observation, "Are there, then, any Christians who say that they know nothing about the unseen world and the future? I was ignorant of the fact, but I am ready to accept it on the authority of a professional theologian," is either a quibble, or one of many indications that he does not recognise the point at issue. I am speaking, as the sentence shows,¹ of scientific knowledge—knowledge which can be obtained by our own reason and observation alone—and no

¹ And as Professor Huxley knew, for he expressly states it in the following passage, from which I am quoting in the text:—

"Let us calmly and dispassionately consider Dr Wace's appreciation of Agnosticism. The Agnostic, according to his view, is a person who says he has no means of attaining a scientific knowledge of the unseen world or of the future; by which somewhat loose phraseology Dr. Wace presumably means the theological unseen world and future. I cannot think this description happy either in form or substance, but for the present it may pass. Dr. Wace continues, that is not 'his difference from Christians.' Are there, then, any Christians who say that they know nothing about the unseen world and the future? I was ignorant of the fact, but I am ready to accept it on the authority of a professional theologian, and I proceed to Dr. Wace's next proposition.

"The real state of the case, then, is that the Agnostic 'does not believe the authority' on which 'these things' are stated, which authority is Jesus Christ. He is simply an old-fashioned 'infidel' who is afraid to own to his right name. As 'Presbyter is priest writ large,' so is 'agnostic' the mere Greek equivalent for the Latin 'infidel.' There is an attractive simplicity about this solution of the problem; and it has that advantage of being somewhat offensive to the persons attacked, which is so dear to the less refined sort of controversialist."—*Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 211.

one with Professor Huxley's learning is justified in being ignorant that it is not upon such knowledge, but upon supernatural revelation, that Christian belief rests. However, as he goes on to say, my view of "the real state of the case is that the Agnostic 'does not believe the authority' on which 'these things' are stated, which authority is Jesus Christ. He is simply an old-fashioned 'infidel' who is afraid to own to his right name." The argument has nothing to do with his motive, whether it is being afraid or not. It only concerns the fact that that by which he is distinctively separated from the Christian is that he does not believe the assurances of Jesus Christ.

Professor Huxley thinks there is "an attractive simplicity about this solution of the problem"—he means, of course, this statement of the case—"and it has that advantage of being somewhat offensive to the persons attacked, which is so dear to the less refined sort of controversialist." I think Professor Huxley must have forgotten himself and his own feelings in this observation. There can be no question, of course, of his belonging himself to the more refined sort of controversialists; but he has a characteristic fancy for solutions of problems, or statements of cases, which have the "advantage of being somewhat offensive to the persons attacked." Without taking

this particular phrase into account, it certainly has "the advantage of being offensive to the persons attacked" that Professor Huxley should speak in this article¹ of "the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief"—the word "honest" is not a misquotation—"honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed a sin of the deepest dye, deserving and involving the same future retribution as murder or robbery," or that he should say, "Trip in morals or in doctrine (especially in doctrine), without due repentance or retractation, or fail to get properly baptised before you die, and a *plébiscite* of the Christians of Europe, if they were true to their creeds, would affirm your everlasting damnation by an immense majority." We have fortunately nothing to do with *plébiscites* in this argument; and as statements of authoritative Christian teaching, the least that can be said of these allegations is that they are offensive exaggerations. It had "the advantage," again, of being "offensive to the persons attacked," when Professor Huxley, in an article in the 'Nineteenth Century' on 'Science and the Bishops,' in November 1887,² said

that "scientific ethics can and does declare that the profession of belief" in such narratives as that of the devils entering a herd of swine, or of the fig-tree that was blasted for bearing no figs, upon the evidence on which multitudes of Christians believe it, "is immoral"; and the observation which follows, that "theological apologists . . . would do well to consider the fact that, in the matter of intellectual veracity, science is already a long way ahead of the Churches," has the same "advantage." I repeat that I cannot but treat Professor Huxley as an example of the more refined sort of controversialist; it must be supposed, therefore, that when he speaks of observations or insinuations which are somewhat offensive to the "persons attacked" being dear to the other sort of controversialists, he is unconscious of his own methods of controversy—or, shall I say, his own temptations?

But I desire as far as possible to avoid any rivalry with Professor Huxley in these refinements, more or less, of controversy; and am, in fact, forced by pressure both of space and of time to keep as rigidly as possible to the points directly at issue. He proceeds to restate the case as follows:¹ "The

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' pp. 240, 242.

² Republished in 'Science and Christian Tradition' under the title of 'An Episcopal Trilogy'; see p. 141.

¹ "The Agnostic says, 'I cannot find good evidence that so and so is true.' 'Ah,' says his adversary, seizing his opportunity, 'then you declare that Jesus Christ was untruthful, for He said so and

Agnostic says, 'I cannot find good evidence that so and so is true.' 'Ah,' says his adversary, seizing his opportunity, 'then you declare that Jesus Christ was untruthful, for He said so and so'—a very telling method of rousing prejudice." Now, that superior scientific veracity to which, as we have seen, Professor Huxley lays claim, should have prevented his putting such vulgar words into my mouth. There is not a word in my paper to charge Agnostics with declaring that Jesus Christ was "untruthful." I believe it impossible in these days for any man who claims attention—I might say, for any man—to declare our Lord untruthful. What I said, and what I repeat, is that the position of an Agnostic involves the conclusion that Jesus Christ was under an "illusion" in respect to the deepest beliefs of His life and teaching. The words of my paper are: "An Agnosticism which knows nothing of the re-

so'; a very telling method of rousing prejudice. But suppose that the value of the evidence as to what Jesus may have said and done, and as to the exact nature and scope of His authority, is just that which the Agnostic finds it most difficult to determine? If I venture to doubt that the Duke of Wellington gave the command, 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!' at Waterloo, I do not think that even Dr. Wace would accuse me of disbelieving the Duke. Yet it would be just as reasonable to do this as to accuse any one of denying what Jesus said before the preliminary question as to what He did say is settled."—'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 212.

lation of man to God must not only refuse belief to our Lord's most undoubted teaching, but must deny the reality of the spiritual convictions in which He lived and died." The point is this—that there can, at least, be no reasonable doubt that Jesus Christ lived, and taught, and died, in the belief of certain great principles, respecting the existence of God, our relation to God, and His own relation to us, which an Agnostic says are beyond the possibilities of human knowledge; and of course an Agnostic regards Jesus Christ as a man. If so, he must necessarily regard Jesus Christ as mistaken, since the notion of His being untruthful is a supposition which I could not conceive being suggested. The question I have put is not, as Professor Huxley represents, what is the most unpleasant alternative to belief in the primary truths of the Christian religion, but what is the least unpleasant; and all I have maintained is that the least unpleasant alternative necessarily involved is, that Jesus Christ was under an illusion in His most vital convictions.

I content myself with thus rectifying the state of the case, without making the comments which I think would be justified on such a crude misrepresentation of my argument. But Professor Huxley goes on to observe that "the value of the evidence as to what Jesus

may have said and done, and as to the exact nature and scope of His authority, is just that which the Agnostic finds it most difficult to determine." Undoubtedly, that is a primary question; but who would suppose from Professor Huxley's statement of the case that the argument of the paper he is attacking proceeded to deal with this very point, and that he has totally ignored the chief consideration it alleged? Almost immediately after the words Professor Huxley has quoted, the following passage occurs, which I must needs repeat, as containing the central point of the argument: "It may be asked how far we can rely on the accounts we possess of our Lord's teaching on these subjects. Now, it is unnecessary for the general argument before us to enter on those questions respecting the authenticity of the Gospel narratives, which ought to be regarded as settled by M. Renan's practical surrender of the adverse case. *Apart from all disputed points of criticism, no one practically doubts that our Lord lived, and that He died on the cross, in the most intense sense of filial relation to His Father in heaven, and that He bore testimony to that Father's providence, love, and grace towards mankind. The Lord's Prayer affords sufficient evidence upon these points. If the Sermon on the Mount alone be added, the whole unseen world, of which the*

Agnostic refuses to know anything, stands unveiled before us. There you see revealed the Divine Father and Creator of all things, in personal relation to His creatures, hearing their prayers, witnessing their actions, caring for them and rewarding them. There you hear of a future judgment administered by Christ Himself, and of a heaven to be hereafter revealed, in which those who live as the children of that Father, and who suffer in the cause and for the sake of Christ Himself, will be abundantly rewarded. If Jesus Christ preached that sermon, made those promises, and taught that prayer, then any one who says that we know nothing of God, or of a future life, or of an unseen world, says that he does not believe Jesus Christ."

Professor Huxley has not one word to say upon this argument, though the whole case is involved in it. Let us take as an example the illustration he proceeds to give. "If," he says, "I venture to doubt that the Duke of Wellington gave the command, 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!' at Waterloo, I do not think that even Dr. Wace would accuse me of disbelieving the Duke." Certainly not. But if Professor Huxley were to maintain that the pursuit of glory was the true motive of the soldier, and that it was an illusion to suppose that simple devotion to duty could be the supreme guide of military life,

I should certainly charge him with contradicting the Duke's teaching and disregarding his authority and example. A hundred stories like that of "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" might be doubted, or positively disproved, and it would still remain a fact beyond all reasonable doubt that the Duke of Wellington was essentially characterised by the sternest and most devoted sense of duty, and that he had inculcated duty as the very watchword of a soldier; and even Professor Huxley would not suggest that Lord Tennyson's ode, which has embodied this characteristic in immortal verse, was an unfounded poetical romance.

The main question at issue, in a word, is one which Professor Huxley has chosen to leave entirely on one side—whether, namely, allowing for the utmost uncertainty entertained on other points by the criticism to which he appeals, there is any reasonable doubt that the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount afford a true account of our Lord's essential belief and cardinal teaching. If they do—then I am not now contending that they involve the whole of the Christian creed; I am not arguing, as Professor Huxley seems to suppose, that he ought for that reason alone to be a Christian—I simply represent that, as an Agnostic, he must regard those beliefs and that teaching as mistaken, as

the result of an illusion, to say the least. I am not going, therefore, to follow Professor Huxley's example, and go down a steep place with the Gadarene swine into a sea of uncertainties and possibilities, and stake the whole case of Christian belief as against Agnosticism upon one of the most difficult and mysterious narratives in the New Testament. I will state my position on that question presently. But I am first and chiefly concerned to point out that Professor Huxley has skilfully evaded the very point and edge of the argument he had to meet. Let him raise what difficulties he pleases, with the help of his favourite critics, about the Gadarene swine, or even about all the stories of demoniacs. He will find that his critics—and even critics more rationalistic than they—fail him when it comes to the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount, and, I will add, the story of the Passion. He will find, or rather he must have found, that the very critics he relies upon recognise that in the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer, allowing for variations in form and order, the substance of our Lord's essential teaching is preserved. On a point which, until Professor Huxley shows cause to the contrary, can hardly want argument, the judgment of the most recent of his witnesses may suffice—Professor Reuss of Strasburg. In Pro-

fessor Huxley's article on the 'Evolution of Theology' in the 'Fortnightly Review' for March 1886, he says :¹ "As Reuss appears to me to be one of the most learned, acute, and fair-minded of those whose works I have studied, I have made most use of the commentary and dissertations in his splendid French edition of the Bible." What, then, is the opinion of the critic for whom Professor Huxley has this regard? In the volume of his work which treats of the first three Gospels, Reuss says, at pp. 191, 192,² "If anywhere the tradition which has preserved to us the reminiscences of the life of Jesus upon earth carries with it certainty and the evidence of its fidelity, it is here;" and again,³ "In short, it must be acknowledged that the redactor, in thus concentrating the substance of the moral teaching of the Lord, has rendered a real service to the religious study of this portion of the tradition, and the reserves

which historical criticism has a right to make with respect to the form will in no way diminish this advantage." It will be observed that Professor Reuss thinks, as many good critics have thought, that the Sermon on the Mount combines various distinct utterances of our Lord, but he none the less recognises that it embodies an unquestionable account of the substance of our Lord's teaching.

But it is surely superfluous to argue either this particular point, or the main conclusion which I have founded on it. Can there be any doubt whatever, in the mind of any reasonable man, that Jesus Christ had beliefs respecting God for which an Agnostic alleges there is no sufficient ground? We know something at all events of what His disciples taught; we have authentic original documents, unquestioned by any of Professor Huxley's authorities, as to what St. Paul taught and believed, and of what he taught and believed respecting his Master's teaching; and the central point of this teaching is a direct assertion of knowledge and revelation as against the very Agnosticism from which Professor Huxley manufactured that designation. "As I passed by," said St. Paul at Athens, "I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly [or in agnosticism] worship, Him declare I unto

¹ Reprinted in 'Science and Hebrew Tradition,' p. 294, note.

² "Si quelque part la tradition, qui nous a conservé les souvenirs du passage de Jésus sur la terre, porte avec elle la certitude, la preuve de sa fidélité, c'est bien ici."

³ "En somme, cependant, il convient de reconnaître que le rédacteur, en concentrant ainsi la substance de l'enseignement moral du Seigneur, a rendu un vrai service à l'étude religieuse de cette partie de la tradition, et les réserves que la critique historique est en droit de faire sur la forme n'amoin-driront en aucune façon cet avantage."

you.”¹ An Agnostic withholds his assent from this primary article of the Christian creed ; and though Professor Huxley, in spite of the lack of information he alleges respecting early Christian teaching, knows enough on the subject to have a firm belief² “that the Nazarenes, say, of the year 40,” headed by James, would have thought worthy of stoning any one who propounded the Nicene Creed to them, he will hardly contend that they denied this article, or doubted that Jesus Christ believed it. Let us again listen to the authority to whom Professor Huxley himself refers. Reuss says at p. 4 of the work already quoted³ :—

¹ Acts xvii. 23.

² ‘Science and Christian Tradition,’ p. 233.

³ “La littérature historique, dans l’Église primitive, se rattache de la manière la plus immédiate aux souvenirs recueillis par les Apôtres et leurs amis aussitôt après leur séparation d’avec leur maître. Le besoin d’un pareil retour vers le passé naissait naturellement de la profonde impression qu’avait faite sur eux l’enseignement, et plus encore l’individualité de Jésus elle-même, et sur laquelle se fondaient et leurs espérances pour l’avenir et leurs convictions, naguère assez vagues encore, concernant le mystère qui entourait sa personne. . . . C’est dans ces faits, dans cette continuité d’une tradition qui doit remonter jusqu’au lendemain même le la scène tragique de Golgotha, que nous trouvons une puissante garantie de son authenticité. . . . Nous avons la preuve historique et directe qu’il ne l’a pas été” (interrompu). Non seulement l’un de nos évangélistes la fournit en termes formels (Luke i. 2, &c.), en maint autre endroit encore nous voyons percer l’idée ou le point de vue, que tout

“Historical literature in the primitive Church attaches itself in the most immediate manner to the reminiscences collected by the apostles and their friends directly after their separation from their Master. The need of such a return to the past arose naturally from the profound impression which had been made upon them by the teaching, and still more by the individuality itself of Jesus, and on which were founded both their hopes for the future and their convictions, but lately vague enough, concerning the mystery which surrounded His person. . . . It is in these facts, in this continuity of a tradition which must go back to the very morrow of the tragic scene of Golgotha, that we have a strong guarantee for its authenticity. . . . We have direct historical proof that the thread of tradition was not interrupted. Not only does one of our evangelists furnish this proof in formal terms (Luke i. 2), but in many other places besides we perceive the idea, or the point of view, that all which the apostles know, think, and teach, is at bottom and essentially a reminiscence, a reflection of what they have seen and learnt at another time, a reproduction of lessons and impressions received.”

Now, let it be allowed for argument’s sake that the belief and teaching of the apostles are distinct from those of subsequent Christianity, yet it is surely a mere paradox to maintain that they did not assert, as taught by their Master, truths which an Agnostic denies. They certainly spoke, as Paul did, of the love of God ; they certainly spoke,

ce que les Apôtres savent, pensent et enseignent, est au fond et essentiellement un souvenir, un reflet de ce qu’ils ont vu et appris autrefois, une reproduction des leçons et des impressions reçues.”

as Paul did, of Jesus having been raised from the dead by God the Father (Gal. i. 1); they certainly spoke, as Paul did, of Jesus Christ returning to judge the world; they certainly spoke, as Paul did, of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 31). That they could have done this without Jesus Christ having taught God's love, or having said that God was His Father, or having declared that He would judge the world, is a supposition which will certainly be regarded by an overwhelming majority of reasonable men as a mere paradox; and I cannot conceive, until he says so, that Professor Huxley would maintain it. But if so, then all Professor Huxley's argumentation about the Gadarene swine is mere irrelevance to the argument he undertakes to answer. The Gospels might be obliterated as evidence to-morrow, and it would remain indisputable that Jesus Christ taught certain truths respecting God, and man's relation to God, from which an Agnostic withholds his assent. If so, he does not believe Jesus Christ's teaching; he is so far an unbeliever; and "unbeliever," Dr. Johnson says, is an equivalent of "infidel."

This consideration will indicate another irrelevance in Professor Huxley's argument. He asks for a definition of what a Christian is, before he will allow that he can be

justly called an infidel. But without being able to give an accurate definition of a crayfish, which perhaps only Professor Huxley could do, I may be very well able to say that some creatures are not crayfish; and it is not necessary to frame a definition of a Christian in order to say confidently that a person who does not believe the broad and unquestionable elements of Christ's teachings and convictions is not a Christian. "Infidel" or "unbeliever" is, of course, as Professor Huxley says, a relative and not a positive term. He makes a great deal of play out of what he seems to suppose will be a very painful and surprising consideration to myself, that to a Mahomedan I am an infidel. Of course I am; and I should never expect a Mahomedan, if he were called upon, as I was, to argue before an assembly of his own fellow-believers, to call me anything else. Professor Huxley is good enough to imagine me in his company on a visit to the Hazar Mosque at Cairo. When he entered that mosque without due credentials, he suspects that, had he understood Arabic, "dog of an infidel" would have been by no means the most "unpleasant" of the epithets showered upon him, before he could explain and apologise for the mistake.¹ If he says, "I had had the pleasure of Dr. Wace's company on that occasion,

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 234.

the indiscriminate followers of the Prophet would, I am afraid, have made no difference between us; not even if they had known that he was the head of an orthodox Christian seminary." Probably not; and I will add that I should have felt very little confidence in any attempts which Professor Huxley might have made, in the style of his present article, to protect me, by repudiating for himself the unpleasant epithets which he deprecates. It would, I suspect, have been of very little avail to attempt a subtle explanation, to one of the learned *mollahs* of whom he speaks, that he really did not mean to deny that there was one God, but only that he did not know anything on the subject, and that he desired to avoid expressing any opinion respecting the claims of Mahomet. It would be plain to the learned *mollah* that Professor Huxley did not believe either of the articles of the Mahommedan creed; in other words, that, for all his fine distinctions, he was at bottom a downright infidel, such as I confessed myself, and that there was an end of the matter. There is no fair way of avoiding the plain matter of fact in either case. A Mahommedan believes and asserts that there is no God but God, and that Mahomet is the Prophet of God. I don't believe Mahomet. In the plain, blunt, sensible phrase people used to use on such subjects, I

believe he was a false prophet, and I am a downright infidel about him. The Christian creed might almost be summed up in the assertion that there is one, and but one God, and that Jesus Christ is His Prophet; and whoever denies that creed says that he does not believe Jesus Christ, by whom it was undoubtedly asserted. It is better to look facts in the face, especially from a scientific point of view. Whether Professor Huxley is justified in his denial of that creed is a further question, which demands separate consideration, but which was not, and is not now, at issue. All I say is that his position involves that disbelief or infidelity, and that this is a responsibility which must be faced by Agnosticism.

But I am forced to conclude that Professor Huxley cannot have taken the pains to understand the point I raised, not only from the irrelevance of his argument on these considerations, but from a misquotation which the superior accuracy of a man of science ought to have rendered impossible. Twice over in the article¹ he quotes me as saying that "it is, and it ought to be, an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe in Jesus Christ." As he winds up his attack upon my paper by bringing against this statement his rather favourite charge of

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' pp. 210, 240.

"immorality"—and even "most profound immorality"¹—he was the more bound to accuracy in his quotation of my words. But neither in the official report of the Congress to which he refers, nor in any report that I have seen, is this the statement attributed to me. What I said, and what I meant to say, was that it ought to be an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly "that he does not believe Jesus Christ." By inserting the little word "in," Professor Huxley has, by an unconscious ingenuity, shifted the import of the statement. He goes on² to denounce "the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed a sin of the deepest dye." His interpretation exhibits, in fact, the idea in his own mind, which he has doubtless conveyed to his readers, of my having said it ought to be unpleasant to a man to have to say that he does not believe in the Christian creed. I certainly think it ought, for reasons I will mention; but that is not what I said. I spoke, deliberately, not of the Christian creed as a whole, but of Jesus Christ as a person, and regarded as a witness to certain

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 240. "That 'it ought to be' unpleasant for any man to say anything which he sincerely, and after due deliberation, believes, is to my mind a proposition of the most profoundly immoral character."

² Ibid., p. 240.

primary truths which an Agnostic will not acknowledge. It was a personal consideration to which I appealed, and not a dogmatic one; and I am sorry, for that reason, that Professor Huxley will not allow me to leave it in the reserve with which I hoped it had been sufficiently indicated.

I said that "no criticism worth mentioning doubts the story of the Passion; and that story involves the most solemn attestation, again and again, of truths of which an Agnostic coolly says he knows nothing. An Agnosticism which knows nothing of the relation of man to God must not only refuse belief to our Lord's most undoubted teaching, but must deny the reality of the spiritual convictions in which He lived and died. It must declare that His most intimate, most intense beliefs, and His dying aspirations, were an illusion. Is that supposition tolerable?" I do not think this deserves to be called "a proposition of the most profoundly immoral character." I think it ought to be unpleasant, and I am sure it always will be unpleasant, for a man to listen to the Saviour on the cross uttering such words as "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and to say that they are not to be trusted as revealing a real relation between the Saviour and God. In spite of all doubts as to the accuracy of the Gospels, Jesus Christ—I trust I

may be forgiven, under the stress of controversy, for mentioning His sacred name in this too familiar manner—is a tender and sacred Figure to all thoughtful minds, and it is, it ought to be, and it always will be, a very painful thing, to say that He lived and died under a mistake in respect to the words which were first and last on His lips. I think, as I have admitted, that it should be unpleasant for a man who has as much appreciation of Christianity, and of its work in the world, as Professor Huxley sometimes shows, to have to say that its belief was founded on no objective reality. The unpleasantness, indeed, of denying one system of thought may be balanced by the pleasantness, as Professor Huxley suggests, of asserting another and a better one. But nothing, to all time, can do away with the unpleasantness, not only of repudiating sympathy with the most sacred figure of humanity in His deepest beliefs and feelings, but of pronouncing Him under an illusion in His last agony. If that be the truth, let it by all means be said; but if we are to talk of “immorality” in such matters, I think there must be a lack of moral sensibility in any man who could say it without pain.

The plain fact is that this misquotation would have been as impossible as a good deal else of Professor Huxley’s argument, had he, in any degree, appreciated the

real strength of the hold which Christianity has over men’s hearts and minds. The strength of the Christian Church, in spite of its faults, errors, and omissions, is not in its creed, but in its Lord and Master. In spite of all the critics, the Gospels have conveyed to the minds of millions of men a living image of Christ. They see Him there; they hear His voice; they listen, and they believe Him. It is not so much that they accept certain doctrines as taught by Him, as that they accept Him, Himself, as their Lord and their God. The sacred fire of trust in Him descended upon the Apostles, and has from them been handed on from generation to generation. It is with that living personal Figure that Agnosticism has to deal; and as long as the Gospels practically produce the effect of making that Figure a reality to human hearts, so long will the Christian faith, and the Christian Church, in their main characteristics, be vital and permanent forces in the world. Professor Huxley tells us, in a melancholy passage,¹ that he cannot define “the grand figure of Jesus.” Who shall dare to “define” it? But saints have both written and lived an *imitatio Christi*, and men and women can feel and know what they cannot define. Professor Huxley, it would seem, would have

¹ ‘Science and Christian Tradition,’ p. 229.

us wait coolly until we had solved all critical difficulties before acting on such a belief. "Because," he says,¹ "we are often obliged, by the pressure of events, to act on very bad evidence, it does not follow that it is proper to act on such evidence when the pressure is absent." Certainly not; but it is strange ignorance of human nature for Professor Huxley to imagine that there is no "pressure" in this matter. It was a voice which understood the human heart better which said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and the attraction of that voice outweighs many a critical difficulty, under the pressure of the burdens and the sins of life.

Professor Huxley, indeed, admits, in one sentence of his article, the force of this influence on individuals.

"If," he says,² "a man can find a friend, the hypostasis of all his hopes, the mirror of his ethical ideal, in the Jesus of any, or all, of the Gospels, let him live by faith in that ideal. Who shall or can forbid him? But let him not delude himself with the notion that his faith is evidence of the objective reality of that in which he trusts. Such evidence is to be obtained only by the use of the methods of science, as applied to history and to literature, and it amounts at present to very little."

Well, a single man's belief in an ideal may be very little evidence of its objective reality. But the con-

viction of millions of men, generation after generation, of the veracity of the four evangelical witnesses, and of the human and divine reality of the Figure they describe, has at least something of the weight of the verdict of a jury. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. Practically the Figure of Christ lives. The Gospels have created it; and it subsists as a personal fact in life, alike among believers and unbelievers. Professor Huxley himself, in spite of all his scepticism, appears to have his own type of this character. The apologue of the woman taken in adultery, he says,³ "if internal evidence were an infallible guide, might well be affirmed to be a typical example of the teachings of Jesus." Internal evidence may not be an infallible guide; but it certainly carries great weight, and no one has relied more upon it in these questions than the critics whom Professor Huxley quotes.

But as I should be sorry to imitate Professor Huxley, on so momentous a subject, by evading the arguments and facts he alleges, I will consider the question of external evidence on which he dwells. I must repeat that the argument of my paper is independent of this controversy. The fact that our Lord taught and believed what Agnostics ignore is not dependent on the criticism of the four Gospels. In addition to

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 243.

² Ibid., p. 244.

³ Ibid., p. 223.

the general evidence to which I have alluded, there is a further consideration which Professor Huxley feels it necessary to mention, but which he evades by an extraordinary inconsequence. He alleges that the story of the Gadarene swine involves fabulous matter, and that this discredits the trustworthiness of the whole Gospel record. But he says¹ :—

“At this point a very obvious objection arises, and deserves full and candid consideration. It may be said that critical scepticism carried to the length suggested is historical pyrrhonism : that if we are to altogether discredit an ancient or a modern historian because he has assumed fabulous matter to be true, it will be as well to give up paying any attention to history. . . . Of course,” he acknowledges, “this is perfectly true. I am afraid there is no man alive whose witness could be accepted, if the condition precedent were proof that he had never invented and promulgated a myth.”

The question, then, which Professor Huxley himself raises, and which he had to answer, was this : Why is the general evidence of the Gospels, on the main facts of our Lord's life and teaching, to be discredited, even if it be true that they have invented or promulgated a myth about the Gadarene swine? What is his answer to that simple and broad question? Strange to say, absolutely none at all ! He leaves this vital question without any answer, and goes back to the Gadarene swine. The question he raises

¹ ‘Science and Christian Tradition,’ p. 224.

is whether the supposed incredibility of the story of the Gadarene swine involves the general untrustworthiness of the story of the Gospels ; and his conclusion is that it involves the incredibility of the story of the Gadarene swine. A more complete evasion of his own question it would be difficult to imagine. As Professor Huxley almost challenges me to state what I think of that story, I have only to say that I fully believe it, and, moreover, that Professor Huxley, in this very article, has removed the only consideration which would have been a serious obstacle to my belief. If he were prepared to say, on his high scientific authority, that the narrative involves a contradiction of established scientific truth, I could not but defer to such a decision, and I might be driven to consider those possibilities of interpolation in the narrative, which Professor Huxley is good enough to suggest to all who feel the improbability of the story too much for them. But Professor Huxley expressly says² :—

“I admit I have no *a priori* objection to offer. . . . For anything I can absolutely prove to the contrary, there may be spiritual things capable of the same transmigration, with like effects. Moreover, I am bound to add that perfectly truthful persons, for whom I have the greatest respect, believe in stories about spirits at the present day, quite as improbable as that we are considering. So I declare, as plainly

² Ibid., p. 226.

as I can, that I am unable to show cause why these transferable devils should not exist."

Very well, then, as the highest science of the day is unable to show cause against the possibility of the narrative, and as I regard the Gospels as containing the evidence of trustworthy persons who were contemporary with the events narrated, and as their general veracity carries to my mind the greatest possible weight, I accept their statement in this, as in other instances. Professor Huxley ventures¹ "to doubt whether, at this present moment, any Protestant theologian, who has a reputation to lose, will say that he believes the Gadarene story." He will judge whether I fall under his description; but I repeat that I believe it, and that he has removed the only objection to my believing it.

However, to turn finally to the important fact of external evidence. Professor Huxley reiterates, again and again, that the verdict of scientific criticism is decisive against the supposition that we possess in the four Gospels the authentic and contemporary evidence of known writers. He repeats,² "without the slightest fear of refutation, that the four Gospels, as they have come to us, are the work of unknown writers." In particular, he challenges my allegation of "M. Renan's practical

surrender of the adverse case"; and he adds the following observations,³ to which I beg the reader's particular attention:—

"I thought," he says, "I knew M. Renan's works pretty well, but I have contrived to miss this 'practical' (I wish Dr. Wace had defined the scope of that useful adjective) surrender. However, as Dr. Wace can find no difficulty in pointing out the passage of M. Renan's writings by which he feels justified in making his statement, I shall wait for further enlightenment, contenting myself, for the present, with remarking that if M. Renan were to retract and do penance in Notre Dame to-morrow for any contributions to Biblical criticism that may be specially his property, the main results of that criticism, as they are set forth in the works of Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and Volkmar, for example, would not be sensibly affected."

Let me begin, then, by enlightening Professor Huxley about M. Renan's surrender. I have the less difficulty in doing so as the passages he has contrived to miss have been collected by me already in a little tract on the 'Authenticity of the Gospels,'⁴ and in some lectures on the 'Gospel and its Witnesses';⁵ and I shall take the liberty, for convenience' sake, of repeating some of the observations there made.

I beg first to refer to the preface to M. Renan's '*Vie de Jésus*.'⁶ There M. Renan says:—

³ Ibid., p. 213, note.

⁴ Religious Tract Society.

⁵ John Murray, 1884.

⁶ Fifteenth edition, p. xlix.

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 220.

² Ibid., p. 222, note.

"As to Luke, doubt is scarcely possible. The Gospel of St. Luke is a regular composition, founded upon earlier documents. It is the work of an author who chooses, curtails, combines. The author of this Gospel is certainly the same as the author of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, the author of the Acts seems to be a companion of St. Paul—a character which accords completely with St. Luke. I know that more than one objection may be opposed to this reasoning; but one thing at all events is beyond doubt—namely, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is a man who belonged to the second apostolic generation, and this suffices for our purpose. The date of this Gospel, moreover, may be determined with sufficient precision by considerations drawn from the book itself. The twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, which is inseparable from the rest of the work, was certainly written after the siege of Jerusalem, but not long after. We are, therefore, here on solid ground, for we are dealing with a work proceeding entirely from the same hand, and possessing the most complete unity."

It may be important to observe that this admission has been supported by M. Renan's further investigations, as expressed in his subsequent volume on 'The Apostles.' In the preface to that volume he discusses fully the nature and value of the narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles, and he pronounces the following decided opinions as to the authorship of that book, and its connection with the Gospel of St. Luke (p. x, *sq.*):—

"One point which is beyond question is that the Acts are by the same author as the third Gospel, and are

a continuation of that Gospel. One need not stop to prove this proposition, which has never been seriously contested. The prefaces at the commencement of each work, the dedication of each to Theophilus, the perfect resemblance of style and of ideas, furnish on this point abundant demonstrations.

"A second proposition, which has not the same certainty, but which may, however, be regarded as extremely probable, is that the author of the Acts is a disciple of Paul, who accompanied him for a considerable part of his travels."

At a first glance, M. Renan observes, this proposition appears indubitable, from the fact that the author, on so many occasions, uses the pronoun "we," indicating that on those occasions he was one of the apostolic band by whom St. Paul was accompanied. "One may even be astonished that a proposition apparently so evident should have found persons to contest it." He notices, however, the difficulties which have been raised on the point, and then proceeds as follows (p. xiv):—

"Must we be checked by these objections? I think not; and I persist in believing that the person who finally prepared the Acts is really the disciple of Paul, who says 'we' in the last chapters. All difficulties, however insoluble they may appear, ought to be, if not dismissed, at least held in suspense by an argument so decisive as that which results from the use of this word 'we.'"

He then observes that MSS. and tradition combine in assigning the third Gospel to a certain Luke,

and that it is scarcely conceivable that a name, in other respects obscure, should have been attributed to so important a work for any other reason than that it was the name of the real author. Luke, he says, had no place in tradition, in legend, or in history, when these two treatises were ascribed to him. M. Renan concludes in the following words: "We think, therefore, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is in all reality Luke, the disciple of Paul."

Now, let the import of these expressions of opinion be duly weighed. Of course M. Renan's judgments are not to be regarded as affording in themselves any adequate basis for our acceptance of the authenticity of the chief books of the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles and the four Gospels bear on their face certain positive claims, on the faith of which they have been accepted in all ages of the Church; and they do not rest, in the first instance, on the authority of any modern critic. But though M. Renan would be a very unsatisfactory witness to rely upon for the purpose of positive testimony to the Gospels, his estimates of the value of modern critical objections to those sacred books have all the weight of the admissions of a hostile witness. No one doubts his familiarity with the whole range of the criticism represented by such names as

Strauss and Baur, and no one questions his disposition to give full weight to every objection which that criticism can urge. Even without assuming that he is prejudiced on either one side or the other, it will be admitted on all hands that he is more favourably disposed than otherwise to such criticism as Professor Huxley relies on. When, therefore, with this full knowledge of the literature of the subject, such a writer comes to the conclusion that the criticism in question has entirely failed to make good its case on a point like that of the authorship of St. Luke's Gospel, we are at least justified in concluding that critical objections do not possess the weight which unbelievers or sceptics are wont to assign to them. M. Renan, in a word, is no adequate witness to the Gospels; but he is a very significant witness as to the value of modern critical objections to them.

Let us pass to the two other so-called "synoptical" Gospels. With respect to St. Matthew, M. Renan says in the same preface (*'Vie de Jésus,'* p. lxxxi):—

"To sum up, I admit the four canonical Gospels as serious documents. All go back to the age which followed the death of Jesus; but their historical value is very diverse. St. Matthew evidently deserves peculiar confidence for the discourses. Here are 'the oracles,' the very notes taken while the memory of the instruction of Jesus was living and definite. A kind of

flashing brightness at once sweet and terrible, a divine force, if I may so say, underlines these words, detaches them from the context, and renders them easily recognisable by the critic."

In respect again to St. Mark, he says (p. lxxxii):—

"The Gospel of St. Mark is the one of the three Synoptics which has remained the most ancient, the most original, and to which the least of later additions have been made. The details of fact possess in St. Mark a definiteness which we seek in vain in the other evangelists. He is fond of reporting certain sayings of our Lord in Syro-Chaldaic. He is full of minute observations, proceeding, beyond doubt, from an eye-witness. There is nothing to conflict with the supposition that this eye-witness, who had evidently followed Jesus, who had loved Him and watched Him in close intimacy, and who had preserved a vivid image of Him, was the Apostle Peter himself, as Papias has it."

I call these admissions a "practical surrender" of the adverse case, as stated by critics like Strauss and Baur, who denied that we had in the Gospels contemporary evidence; and I do not think it necessary to define the adjective in order to please Professor Huxley's appetite for definitions. At the very least, it is a direct contradiction of Professor Huxley's statement (p. 222) that we know "absolutely nothing" of "the originator or originators" of the narratives in the first three Gospels; and it is an equally direct contradiction of the assumption, on which his main reply to my paper

is based, that we have no trustworthy evidence of what our Lord taught and believed.¹

But Professor Huxley seems to have been apprehensive that M. Renan would fail him, for he proceeds, in the passage I have quoted, to throw him over, and to take refuge behind "the main results of Biblical criticism, as they are set forth in the works of Strauss, Baur,

¹ Professor Huxley in a further rejoinder, reprinted in 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 355, charges me with unfairness for not mentioning that in 'Les Évangiles,' published one year after the edition of the 'Vie de Jésus' from which I was quoting, M. Renan uses some disparaging expressions respecting the historic value of the Gospels, and particularly of St. Luke; saying, for instance, that "the historic value of the third Gospel is certainly less than that of the two first" ('Évangiles,' p. 283). But, as a matter of fairness, why did Professor Huxley omit to add the next sentence—"At the same time, a comparison between the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles leads to one remarkable fact, which proves (*qui prouve bien*) that the so-called Synoptic Gospels contain really an echo of the language of Jesus,"—the very point on which Professor Huxley says we cannot rely? As to M. Renan's successive volumes, it is well known that a characteristic feature of that writer was his variation of opinion on critical points. But he never withdrew the passages quoted by me from the 'Vie de Jésus'; and, as a matter of date, imprints of the 'Vie de Jésus,' with the quoted passages, were issued after 'Les Évangiles.' But these trivialities are independent of the practical point. Professor Huxley said that we know "absolutely nothing" of the authors of the Gospels. M. Renan says, at least, that we know a good deal. He allows that the Gospels contain traditions written down by contemporaries. He distrusts these contemporaries in some points; but he trusted them well enough to compose a 'Vie de Jésus' out of them.

Reuss, and Volkmar, for example." It is scarcely comprehensible how a writer, who has acquaintance enough with this subject to venture on Professor Huxley's sweeping assertions, can have ventured to couple together those four names for such a purpose. "Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and Volkmar"! Why, they are absolutely destructive of one another! Baur rejected Strauss's theory and set up one of his own; while Reuss and Volkmar in their turn have each dealt fatal blows at Baur's. As to Strauss, I need not spend more time on him than to quote the sentence in which Baur himself puts him out of court on this particular controversy. He says,¹ "The chief peculiarity of Strauss's work is, that it is a criticism of the Gospel history without a criticism of the Gospels." Strauss, in fact, explained the miraculous stories in the Gospels by resolving them into myths, and it was of no importance to his theory how the documents originated. But Baur endeavoured, by a minute criticism of the Gospels themselves, to investigate the historical circumstances of their origin; and he maintained that they were *Tendenz-Schriften*, compiled in the second century, with polemical purposes. Volkmar, however, is in direct conflict with Baur on this point, and in the very work to which

Professor Huxley refers,² he enumerates (p. 18) among "the written testimonies of the first century"—besides St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans and the Apocalypse of St. John—"the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, according to John Mark of Jerusalem, written a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, between the years 70 and 80 of our reckoning—about 75; probably, to be precise, about 73," and he proceeds to give a detailed account of it, "according to the oldest text, and particularly the Vatican text," as indispensable to his account of Jesus of Nazareth. He treats it as written (p. 174) either by John Mark of Jerusalem himself, or by a younger friend of his. Baur, therefore, having upset Strauss, Volkmar proceeds to upset Baur; and what does Reuss do? I quote again from that splendid French edition of the Bible on which Professor Huxley so much relies. On p. 88 of Reuss's Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels, he sums up "the results he believes to have been obtained by critical analysis" under thirteen heads; and the following are some of them:—

"2. Of the three Synoptic Gospels, one only, that which ecclesiastical tradition agrees in attributing to Luke, has reached us in its primitive form.

¹ 'Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien,' 1847, p. 41.

² 'Jesus Nazarenus und die erste christliche Zeit,' 1882.

"3. Luke could draw his knowledge of the Gospel history partly from the information supplied to him by oral tradition; he was able, in Palestine itself, to receive direct communications from immediate witnesses. . . . We may think especially here of the history of the passion and the resurrection, and perhaps also of some other passages of which he is the sole narrator. . . .

"4. A book which an ancient and respectable testimony attributes to Mark, the disciple of Peter, was certainly used by Luke as the principal source of the portion of his Gospel between chap. iv. 31 and ix. 50, and between xviii. 15 and xxi. 38. . . .

"5. According to all probability, the book of Mark, consulted by Luke, comprised in its primitive form what we read in the present day from Mark i. 21 to xiii. 37."¹

¹ As Professor Huxley, in a subsequent article ('Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 264), warns his readers "against any reliance upon Dr. Wace's statements as to the results arrived at by modern criticism," I subjoin, at the end of this article, the whole text of the summary given by Reuss, in the passage above referred to, of the results at which he arrived. The reader will thus be able to judge with what justice so magisterial a sentence is pronounced. I presume that reliance may be placed on Reuss's own statement of Reuss's conclusions; and he appears to be Professor Huxley's favourite commentator. Thus, in the note on p. 294 of 'Science and Hebrew Tradition,' Professor Huxley says: "As Reuss appears to me to be one of the most learned, acute, and fair-minded of those whose works I have studied, I have made most use of the commentary and dissertations in his splendid French edition of the Bible." It is from that edition that my quotations are made. It has been objected that Reuss subsequently states that, in referring to the authors of the Gospels, in the above passage, by their accepted names, he is only "conforming provisionally to the general usage," and that it is a further question whether the "Mark"

It seems unnecessary, for the purpose of estimating the value of Professor Huxley's appeal to these critics, to quote any more. It appears from these statements of Reuss that if "the results of Biblical criticism," as represented by him, are to be trusted, we have the whole third Gospel in its primitive form, as it was written by "Luke"; and in this, as we have seen, Reuss is in entire agreement with Renan's judgment in the 'Vie de Jésus.' But besides this, a previous book, attributed by an ancient and respectable tradition to Mark, St. Peter's disciple, was certainly in existence before Luke's Gospel, and was used by Luke; and in all probability

and "Luke" to whom the Gospels are assigned are the same persons as the Mark and Luke mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul. He says, however, in respect to the name Mark, that "the doubts concerning the identity of the persons are not perhaps of very great weight" ('Hist. Evang.,' p. 99); and in respect to Luke, he expresses, in his introduction to the Acts of the Apostles, his opinion that the identification of the author with the Luke who was the friend of St. Paul is one of the most reasonable hypotheses which have been made in reference to the problems of Apostolic literature. One may be reminded, by these subtleties, of the critic who thought that the Homeric poems were not produced by Homer, but by another person of the same name. But in any case the conclusion remains, that in respect to the second Gospel "there is an agreement" among modern critics "that the author must have been in a position to be very well informed" (p. 99); and in respect to the author of the third Gospel, as stated above, that he had the opportunity of obtaining information in Palestine itself from immediate witnesses.

this book was, in its primitive form, our present Gospel of St. Mark, with the exception of a few verses at the beginning and the account of the Passion at the end.

Such are those "results of Biblical criticism" to which Professor Huxley has appealed; and we may fairly judge by these, not only of the value of his special contention in reply to my paper, but of the worth of the sweeping assertions he, and writers like him, are given to making about modern critical science. Professor Huxley says that we know "absolutely nothing" about the originators of the Gospel narratives, and he appeals to criticism in the persons of Volkmar and Reuss. Volkmar says that the second Gospel is really either by St. Mark or by one of his friends, and was written about the year 75. Reuss says that the third Gospel, as we now have it, was written by a person who was able, in Palestine itself, to receive information from direct witnesses. Now, Professor Huxley is, of course, entitled to his own opinion; but he is not entitled to quote authorities in support of his opinion when they are in direct opposition to it. He asserts, "without the slightest fear of refutation, that the four Gospels, as they have come to us, are the work of unknown writers." His arguments in defence of such a position will be listened to with respect; but

let it be borne in mind that the opposite arguments he has got to meet are not only those of orthodox critics like myself, but those of Renan, of Volkmar, and of Reuss—I may add of Pfleiderer, well known in this country by his Hibbert Lectures, who, in his recent work on original Christianity,¹ attributes most positively the second Gospel in its present form to St. Mark, and declares that there is no ground whatever for that supposition of an *Urmarcus*—that is, an original groundwork—from which Professor Huxley alleges that "at the present time there is no visible escape."

If I were such an authority on morality as Professor Huxley, I might perhaps use some unpleasant language respecting this vague assumption of criticism being all on

¹ 'Das Urchristenthum,' von Otto Pfleiderer: Berlin, 1887, p. 414: "As to the composition of this Gospel [St. Mark's] nothing tells against, and everything tells for, the correctness of the ecclesiastical tradition which has from the first assigned it to the John Mark who is known to us from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul." Again, on p. 416: "It is further to be observed that in our canonical Gospel of St. Mark we have before us the original work of the evangelist, leaving out of account detached interpolations, such as are to be found in all ancient literature. For the assumption of an *Urmarcus* (or original Mark) substantially different from the canonical book, there is no ground whatever. On the contrary, our Gospel of St. Mark is a work from one fount, written in an individual style, and well arranged in accordance with an individual, a clear, and a lucid order."

his side, when it, in fact, directly contradicts him; and his case is not the only one to which such strictures might be applied. In 'Robert Elsmere,' for example, there is some vapouring about the "great critical operation of the present century" having destroyed the historical basis of the Gospel narrative. As a matter of fact, as we have seen, the great critical operation has resulted, according to the testimony of the critics whom Professor Huxley himself selects, in establishing the fact that we possess contemporary records of our Lord's life from persons who were either eye-witnesses, or who were in direct communication with eye-witnesses on the very scene in which it was passed. Either Professor Huxley's own witnesses are not to be trusted, or Professor Huxley's allegations are rash and unfounded. Conclusions which are denied by Volkmar, denied by Renan, denied by Reuss, are not to be thrown at our heads with a superior air, as if they could not reasonably be doubted. The great result of the "critical operation of this century" has, in fact, been to prove that the contention with which it started in the persons of Strauss and Baur, that we have no contemporary records of Christ's life, is wholly untenable. It has not convinced any of the living critics to whom Professor Huxley appeals; and if he, or any similar writer, still maintains such an assertion,

let it be understood that he stands alone against the leading critics of Europe in the present day.

Perhaps I need say no more for the present in reply to Professor Huxley. I have, I think, shown that he has evaded my point; he has evaded his own points; he has misquoted my words; he has misrepresented the results of the very criticism to which he appeals; and he rests his case on assumptions which his own authorities repudiate. The questions he touches are very grave ones, not to be adequately treated in a Review article. But I should have supposed it a point of scientific morality to treat them, if they are to be treated, with accuracy of reference and strictness of argument.

Note.—Subjoined is the full text of M. Reuss's conclusions referred to in the above article ('Histoire Évangélique,' p. 88):—

"Arrivé au terme de notre analyse critique, il ne nous reste plus qu'à résumer en quelques mots les résultats que nous croyons avoir obtenus :

"1°. La plupart des systèmes imaginés autrefois pour expliquer les rapports d'origine et de dépendance de nos trois premiers évangiles ont manqué leur but, parcequ'ils ne prenaient en considération que les livres tels que nous les possédons aujourd'hui.

"2°. Des trois évangiles synoptiques, un seul, celui que la tradition ecclésiastique s'accorde à attribuer à Luc, nous est parvenu dans sa forme primitive.

"3°. Luc a pu puiser sa connaissance de l'histoire évangélique, en partie dans les renseignements que lui fournissait la tradition orale; il a pu, en Palestine

même, recevoir des communications direct de témoins immédiats. Il est impossible de dire quelles parties ou quels éléments de son ouvrage sont puisés à cette source ; cependant nous pouvons songer ici de préférence à l'histoire de la passion et de la résurrection, peut-être aussi à quelques autres morceaux pour lesquels il est le seul narrateur, ou dans lesquels il se sépare des autres évangélistes—par exemple, chap. v. 1-11 ; vii. 1-17, 36-50 ; xix. 1-27.

“4°. Un livre qu'un témoignage ancien et respectable attribue à Marc, disciple de Pierre, a positivement servi à Luc de source principale pour la partie comprise entre chap. iv. 31-ix. 50 et entre xviii. 15 et xxi. 38, sauf les exceptions mentionnés tout à l'heure.

“5°. Selon toute probabilité, le livre de Marc, consulté par Luc, a compris dans sa forme primitive ce que nous lisons aujourd'hui Marc i. 21-xiii. 37. L'histoire de la passion qui forme les trois derniers chapitres de l'évangile dans sa forme actuelle, n'a pas passé sous les yeux de Luc. Il en est de même des récits compris entre chap. vi. 47 et viii. 26. Ces parties peuvent bien provenir de l'auteur même, mais dans ce cas celui-ci ne les aurait ajoutées qu'après que des exemplaires incomplets étaient déjà répandus dans le public.

“6°. L'histoire de la passion, dans le second évangile, ou si l'on veut, ce livre lui-même dans sa forme plus complète, s'arrêtait au huitième verset du xvi^e chapitre.

“7°. À côté du livre de Marc, et peut-être plus anciennement déjà, il en existait un autre écrit par Matthieu, l'un des douze Apôtres. Ce livre était un recueil de sentences ou maximes et autres enseignements de Jésus. D'après un ancien témoignage, ce recueil aurait existé d'abord en hébreu. Quoi qu'il en soit, les évangélistes qui, plus tard, l'ont mis à profit, ont eu devant eux un texte grec. Il est possible et même

probable qu'il a existé au moins deux éditions de ce texte grec.

“8°. C'est avec le secours de ce Recueil de Matthieu et du livre de Marc (i. 21-xv. 8) qu'un écrivain inconnu a rédigé l'ouvrage que nous appelons aujourd'hui l'évangile selon Matthieu. Ce nom se justifie en tant que probablement l'ancien ouvrage de cet apôtre s'y retrouve, si ce n'est en entier, du moins dans ses éléments essentiels. Il se peut fort bien que cet écrivain ait pu compléter ses matériaux au moyen de la tradition orale. Cela s'appliquerait surtout aux premiers chapitres de son livre, ainsi qu'aux additions qu'il fait à l'histoire de la passion.

“9°. Luc n'a pas connu cet évangile dit selon Matthieu, mais il a eu à sa disposition l'ancien Recueil de l'Apôtre et a pu y puiser la majeure partie de ceux de ses matériaux qui ne se trouvaient point dans le livre de Marc. Cependant il paraît qu'il a eu en main une autre édition de cet ouvrage, que celle dont s'est servi le rédacteur de notre premier évangile.

“10°. Cependant tous les éléments de l'ouvrage de Luc ne doivent pas être dérivés des différentes sources que nous avons distinguées jusqu'ici. Ainsi, il est vraisemblable que la partie du récit qui concerne la naissance de Jean Baptiste et de Jésus est parvenue à Luc dans une forme déjà plus ou moins fixée par la rédaction écrite.

“11°. Le morceau Marc i. 1-20 est une introduction ajoutée au livre déjà complété par l'histoire de la passion, et rédigée par quelqu'un qui a pu et dû se servir, à cet effet, de nos évangiles actuels de Matthieu et de Luc.

“12°. Le livre de Marc ainsi complété (i. 1-xvi. 8) a reçu plus tard diverses additions finales, destinées à lui donner une fin moins abrupte. Les douze derniers versets que nous y lisons maintenant (v. 9-20) manquaient encore au quatrième siècle à beaucoup d'exem-

plaires, et ont été rédigés par quelqu'un qui a pu et dû se servir à cet effet des évangiles de Luc et de Jean et des Actes des Apôtres.

"13°. Ainsi, dans un certain sens, chacun de nos trois évangiles a été l'une des sources d'un autre. Marc l'a été pour notre Matthieu et pour Luc; Luc et Matthieu l'ont été pour Marc, bien entendu, en tant qu'il s'agit de la forme actuelle de celui-ci. La critique s'est égarée en donnant une valeur absolue à des observations justes à l'égard de certains éléments. Elle s'est surtout trompée en admettant que l'auteur du troisième évangile a puisé dans le premier, tandis qu'il fallait dire qu'il a eu ses deux sources principales en commun avec le rédacteur de celui-ci, mais que chacun d'eux les a connues sous une autre forme."

The reader will thus see that Reuss's opinion, formed on purely critical grounds, of the value of the first three Gospels, as authentic records from the hands of those whose names they have always borne, is higher than that of M. Renan. The third Gospel, he believes, has come down to us as "Luke" wrote it, and this writer was able to consult contemporaries and eye-witnesses, and had the use of written documents which are incorporated in the other two Gospels. By far the greater part of our present second Gospel is one of the very documents which "Luke" used, and was written by one who, if not the John Mark of the Acts himself, as he may well have been, had at least the means of being very well informed, and the very memoirs of the apostle Matthew are incorporated in our first Gospel. Yet, in the face of all this, Professor Huxley appeals to "the main results" of modern criticism, as represented by the works of Reuss among others, in support of his statement that we know "absolutely nothing" of the "originator or originators" of the Gospels! Is it my account of the results of that criticism, or his own, which

deserves to be called "as gravely as surprisingly erroneous"?

As to the substance of Reuss's conclusions, it seems natural to ask why the few verses which, with many sound critics, he supposes to have been added at the beginning and end of the original draft of St. Mark's Gospel, or to St. Matthew's original memoirs, should be attributed to "unknown writers" instead of to the evangelists themselves. A man who confessedly wrote three-quarters of a book may be accepted as a *vera causa* for the remainder; but critics seem to forget that "unknown writers" are by the hypothesis unknown.

It may be interesting to compare with Reuss's conclusions those which are maintained in a very remarkable work by an independent English writer, the late Mr. James Smith of Jordanhill, F.R.S., the author of the important work on the voyage and shipwreck of St. Paul. He adduces very strong evidence to show that many of the variations in language between the evangelists are fully explained on the supposition of their having translated from Aramaic memoirs into Greek—a possibility which Reuss does not seem to make much allowance for, but which has recently received strong support both in England and Germany (see 'Dictionary of the Bible,' second edition, 1893, Dr. Sanday's art. 'Gospels,' vol. i. pp. 1242, 1243).

Taking this into account, Mr. Smith states, as follows, the conclusions to which he was led, "from the evidence furnished by the writings of the evangelists, and other ancient writers, respecting the origin and connection of the Gospels" ('Dissertation on the Origin and Connection of the Gospels,' p. xxv):—

"1st. Several of the apostles, including Matthew, *Peter*, and John, committed to writing accounts of the transactions of our Lord and His disciples in the language spoken by them—*i. e.* Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic, known in

the New Testament and the works of the Fathers as Hebrew.

"2d. When the apostles were driven by persecution from Judæa, a history of the life of our Lord was drawn up from the original memoirs, in Hebrew and in Greek, by the apostle Matthew, for the use of the Jewish converts—the Greek being the same as the Gospel according to Matthew.

"3d. St. Luke drew up, for the use of Theophilus, a new life of our Lord, founded upon the authority of eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word—including the Hebrew memoir of Peter and the Greek Gospel of Matthew.

"4th. After Peter's death or departure from Rome (*ἐξόδον*), St. Mark translated the memoir, written by Peter, into Greek.

"5th. John, at a still later period, composed his Gospel from his own original memoirs, omitting much that was already narrated by the other evangelists, for reasons assigned by himself—(xxi. 23)."

Taking into account the additional considerations introduced by the supposition of Aramaic originals, there is a remarkable general similarity between Mr. Smith's conclusions and those of M. Reuss. The late Bishop of Carlisle, in re-editing a few years ago Mr. Smith's work on St. Paul's voyage, expressed a just surprise at the present neglect of this admirable writer. His works deserve a great deal more attention than most of the German criticism which receives such excessive deference.

CHRISTIANITY AND AGNOSTICISM¹

Professor Huxley published a Rejoinder to the previous article in the 'Nineteenth Century' for April 1889; and it is reprinted in 'Science and Christian Tradition' at p. 263, *sq.* He commences with a reference to an article by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the same number as mine, and to her article reference will be found further on. He then, after some reference to a personal question of mere temporary interest, proceeds with the reflections on myself and English theologians to which the first paragraph of the following article replies.

READERS who may be willing to look at this further reply on my part to Professor Huxley, need not be apprehensive of being entangled in any such obscure points of Church history as those with which the Professor has found it necessary to perplex them in support of his contentions; still less of being troubled with any personal explanations. The tone which Professor Huxley has thought fit to adopt, not only towards myself, but towards English theologians in general, excuses me from taking further notice of any personal considerations in the matter. I en-

deavoured to treat him with the respect due to his great scientific position, and he replies by sneering at theologians who are "mere counsel for creeds," saying that the serious question at issue "is whether theological men of science, or theological special pleaders, are to have the confidence of the general public," observing that Holland and Germany are "the only two countries in which, at the present time, professors of theology are to be found, whose tenure of their posts does not depend upon the results to which their inquiries lead them," and thus insinuating that English theologians are debarred by selfish interests from candid inquiry.² I shall presently have

² The following are the passages in Professor Huxley's article which are here referred to:—

"Those who passed from Dr. Wace's article in the last number of the 'Nineteenth Century' to the anticipatory confutation of it which followed in 'The New Reformation,' must have enjoyed the pleasure of a dramatic surprise—just as when the fifth act of a new play proves unexpectedly bright and interesting. Mrs. Ward will, I hope, pardon the comparison, if I say that her effective clearing

¹ From the 'Nineteenth Century,' May 1889.

something to say on the grave misrepresentation of German theology which these insinuations involve ; but for myself and for English

away of antiquated incumbrances from the lists of the controversy reminds me of nothing so much as of the action of some neat-handed, but strong-wristed, Phyllis, who, gracefully wielding her long-handled 'Turk's head,' sweeps away the accumulated results of the toil of generations of spiders. I am the more indebted to this luminous sketch of the results of critical investigation, as it is carried out among those theologians who are men of science and not mere counsel for creeds, since it has relieved me from the necessity of dealing with the greater part of Dr. Wace's polemic, and enables me to devote more space to the really important issues which have been raised. . . .

"I believe that there is not a solitary argument I have used, or that I am about to use, which is original, or has anything to do with the fact that I have been chiefly occupied with natural science. They are all, facts and reasoning alike, either identical with, or consequential upon, propositions which are to be found in the works of scholars and theologians of the highest repute in the only two countries, Holland and Germany,¹ in which, at the present time, professors of theology are to be found, whose tenure of their posts does not depend upon the results to which their inquiries lead them.² . . .

¹ The United States ought, perhaps, to be added, but I am not sure.

² Imagine that all our Chairs of Astronomy had been founded in the fourteenth century, and that their incumbents were bound to sign Ptolemaic articles. In that case, with every respect for the efforts of persons thus hampered to attain and expound the truth, I think men of common sense would go elsewhere to learn astronomy. Zeller's 'Vorträge und Abhandlungen' were published and came into my hands a quarter of a century ago. The writer's rank, as a theologian to begin with, and subsequently as a historian of Greek philosophy, is of the highest. Among these essays are two—'Das Urchristenthum' and 'Die Tübinger historische Schule'—which are likely to be of more use to those who wish to know the real state of the case than all that the official "apologists," with their one eye on truth and

theologians I shall not condescend to reply to them. I content myself with calling the reader's attention to the fact that, in this controversy,

"The most constant reproach which is launched against persons of my way of thinking is, that it is all very well for us to talk about the deductions of scientific thought, but what are the poor and the uneducated to do? Has it ever occurred to those who talk in this fashion that the Creeds and the Articles of their several Confessions, their determination of the exact nature and extent of the teachings of Jesus, their exposition of the real meaning of that which is written in the Epistles (to leave aside all questions concerning the Old Testament), are nothing more than deductions, which, at any rate, profess to be the result of strictly scientific thinking, and which are not worth attending to unless they really possess that character? If it is not historically true that such and such things happened in Palestine eighteen centuries ago, what becomes of Christianity? And what is historical truth but that of which the evidence bears strict scientific investigation? I do not call to mind any problem of natural science which has come under my notice, which is more difficult, or more curiously interesting as a mere problem, than that of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels and that of the historical value of the narratives which they contain. The Christianity of the Churches stands or falls by the results of the purely scientific investigation of these questions. They were first taken up, in a purely scientific spirit, just about a century ago; they have been studied over and over again by men of vast knowledge and critical acumen; but he would be a rash man who should assert that any solution of these problems, as yet formulated, is exhaustive. The most that can be said is that certain prevalent solutions are certainly false, while others are more or less probably true.

"If I am doing my best to rouse my countrymen out of their dogmatic slumbers, it is not that they may be amused

the other on the tenets of their sect, have written. For the opinion of a scientific theologian about theologians of this stamp see pp. 225 and 227 of the 'Vorträge.'

it is Professor Huxley who finds it requisite for his argument to insinuate that his opponents are biassed by sordid motives; and I shall for the future leave him and his sneers out of account, and simply consider his arguments for as much, or as little, as they may be worth. For a similar reason I shall confine myself as far as possible to the issue which I raised at the Church Congress, and for which I then made myself responsible. I do not care, nor would it be of any avail, to follow over the wide and sacred field of Christian evidences an antagonist who resorts to the imputation of mean motives,

by seeing who gets the best of it in a contest between a 'scientist' and a theologian. The serious question is whether theological men of science, or theological special pleaders, are to have the confidence of the general public; it is the question whether a country in which it is possible for a body of excellent clerical and lay gentlemen to discuss, in public meeting assembled, how much it is desirable to let the congregations of the faithful know of the results of Biblical criticism, is likely to wake up with anything short of the grasp of a rough lay hand upon its shoulder; it is the question whether the New Testament books, being, as I believe they were, written and compiled by people who, according to their lights, were perfectly sincere, will not, when properly studied as ordinary historical documents, afford us the means of self-criticism. And it must be remembered that the New Testament books are not responsible for the doctrine invented by the Churches that they are anything but ordinary historical documents. The author of the third Gospel tells us, as straightforwardly as a man can, that he has no claim to any other character than that of an ordinary compiler and editor, who had before him the works of many and variously qualified predecessors."

and who, as I shall show, will not face the witnesses to whom he himself appeals. The manner in which Professor Huxley has met the particular issue he challenged will be a sufficient illustration to impartial minds of the value which is to be attached to any further assaults which he may make upon the Christian position.

Let me then briefly remind the reader of the simple question which is at issue between us. What I alleged was that "an Agnosticism which knows nothing of the relation of man to God must not only refuse belief to our Lord's most undoubted teaching, but must deny the reality of the spiritual convictions in which He lived and died." As evidence of that teaching and of those convictions I appealed to three testimonies—the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the story of the Passion—and I urged that, whatever critical opinion might be held respecting the origin and structure of the four Gospels, there could not be any reasonable doubt that those testimonies "afford a true account of our Lord's essential belief and cardinal teaching." In his original reply, instead of meeting this appeal to three specific testimonies, Professor Huxley shifted the argument to the question of the general credibility of the Gospels, and appealed to "the main results of Biblical criticism, as they are set forth in the works

of Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and Volkmar." He referred to these supposed "results" in support of his assertion that we know "absolutely nothing" of the authorship or genuineness of the four Gospels, and he challenged my reference to Renan as a witness to the fact that criticism has established no such results. In answer I quoted passage after passage from Renan and from Reuss showing that the results at which they had arrived were directly contradictory of Professor Huxley's assertions. How does he meet this evidence? He simply says, in a footnote, "For the present I must content myself with warning my readers against any reliance upon Dr. Wace's statements as to the results arrived at by modern criticism. They are as gravely as surprisingly erroneous." I might ask by what right Professor Huxley thus presumes to pronounce, as it were *ex cathedrâ*, without adducing any evidence, that the statements of another writer are "surprisingly erroneous." But I in my turn content myself with pointing out that, if my quotations from Renan and Reuss had been incorrect, he could not only have said so, but could have produced the correct quotations. But he does not deny, as of course he cannot, that Reuss, for example, really states, as the mature result of his investigations, what I quoted from him respecting the third Gospel—namely, that it was

not improbably written by St. Luke himself, and has reached us in its primitive form; and further, that its author used a book written either by St. Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, or at least by some one who had similar means of information, and that this book in all probability comprised in its primitive form what we read in the present day from Mark i. 21 to xiii. 37. These are the results of modern criticism as stated by a Biblical critic in whom Professor Huxley expressed special confidence. It was not, therefore, my statements of the results of Biblical criticism with which Professor Huxley was confronted, but Reuss's statements; and unless he can show that my quotation was a false one, he ought to have had the candour to acknowledge that Reuss, at least, is on these vital points dead against him. Instead of any such frank admission, he endeavours to explain away the force of his reference to Reuss. It may, he says, be well for him

"to observe that approbation of the manner in which a great Biblical scholar, for instance, Reuss, does his work does not commit me to the adoption of all, or indeed any, of his views; and, further, that the disagreements of a series of investigators do not in any way interfere with the fact that each of them has made important contributions to the body of truth ultimately established."¹

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 264.

But I beg to observe that Professor Huxley did not appeal to Reuss's methods, but to Reuss's results. He said that no retraction by M. Renan would sensibly affect "the *main results of Biblical criticism as they are set forth in the works of Strauss, Baur, Reuss, and Volkmar.*" I have given him the results as set forth by Reuss in Reuss's own words, and all he has to offer in reply is an *ipse dixit* in a footnote, and an evasion in the text of his article.

But, as I said, this general discussion respecting the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels was itself an evasion of my argument, which rested upon the specific testimony of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the narrative of the Passion; and, accordingly, in his present rejoinder Professor Huxley, with much protestation that he made no evasion, addresses himself to these three points; and what is his answer? I feel obliged to characterise it as another evasion, and in one particular an evasion of a flagrant kind. The main point of his argument is that, from various circumstances, which I will presently notice more particularly, there is much reason to doubt whether the Sermon on the Mount was ever actually delivered in the form in which it is recorded in St. Matthew. He notices, for instance, the combined similarity and difference between

St. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and St. Luke's so-called "Sermon on the Plain," and then he adds:—

"I thought that all fairly attentive and intelligent students of the Gospels, to say nothing of theologians of reputation, knew these things. But how can any one who does know them have the conscience to ask whether there is 'any reasonable doubt' that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Jesus of Nazareth?"¹

It is a pity that Professor Huxley seems as incapable of accuracy in his quotations of an opponent's words as in his references to the authorities to whom he appeals. I did not ask "whether there is any reasonable doubt that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Jesus of Nazareth," and I expressly observed, in the article to which Professor Huxley is replying, "that Professor Reuss thinks, as many good critics have thought, that the Sermon on the Mount combines various distinct utterances of our Lord." What I did ask, in words which Professor Huxley quotes, and therefore had before his eyes, was "whether there is any reasonable doubt that the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount afford a true account of our Lord's essential belief and cardinal teaching." That is an entirely distinct question from the one which Professor Huxley discusses, and a confusion of the two is peculiarly in-

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 277.

excusable in a person who holds that purely human view of the Gospel narratives which he represents. If a long report of a speech appears in the 'Times,' and a shortened report appears in the 'Standard,' every one knows that we are none the less made acquainted—perhaps made still better acquainted—with the essential purport and cardinal meaning of the speaker. On the supposition, similarly, that St. Matthew and St. Luke are simply giving two distinct accounts of the same address, with such omissions and variations of order as suited the purposes of their respective narratives, we are in at least as good a position for knowing what was the main burden of the address as if we had only one account; and perhaps in a better position, as we see what were the points which both reporters deemed essential. As Professor Huxley himself observes, we have reports of speeches in ancient historians which are certainly not in the very words of the speakers; yet no one doubts that we know the main purport of the speeches of Pericles which Thucydides records.

This attempt, therefore, to answer my appeal to the substance of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is a palpable evasion, and it is aggravated by the manner in which Professor Huxley quotes a high German authority in support of his contention. I am much

obliged to him for appealing to Holtzmann; for, though Holtzmann's own conclusions respecting the books of the New Testament seem to me often extravagantly sceptical and far-fetched, and though I cannot, therefore, quite agree with Professor Huxley that his 'Lehrbuch' gives "a remarkably full and fair account of the present results of criticism," yet I agree that it gives on the whole a full and fair account of the course of criticism and of the opinions of its chief representatives. Instead, therefore, of imitating Professor Huxley, and pronouncing an *ipse dixit* as to the state of criticism or the opinions of critics, I am very glad to be able to refer to a book of which the authority is recognised by him, and which will save both my readers and myself from embarking on the wide and waste ocean of the German criticism of the last fifty years. "Holtzmann," says Professor Huxley in a note,¹ "has no doubt that the Sermon on the Mount is a compilation, or, as he calls it in his recently published 'Lehrbuch' (p. 372), 'an artificial mosaic work.'" Now, let the reader attend to what Holtzmann really says in the passage referred to. His words are: "In the so-called Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.) we find constructed, on the basis of a real discourse of fundamental

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 277.

significance, a skilfully-articulated mosaic work.”¹ The phrase was not so long a one that Professor Huxley need have omitted the important words by which those he quotes are qualified. Holtzmann recognises, as will be seen, that a real discourse of fundamental significance underlies the Sermon on the Mount. That is enough for my purpose; for no reasonable person will suppose that the fundamental significance of the real discourse has been entirely obliterated, especially as the main purport of the sermon in St. Luke is of the same character. But Professor Huxley must know perfectly well, as every one else does, that he would be maintaining a paradox, in which every critic of repute, to say nothing of every man of common-sense, would be against him, if he were to maintain that the Sermon on the Mount does not give a substantially correct idea of our Lord’s teaching. But to admit this is to admit my point, so he rides off on a side-issue as to the question of the precise form in which the sermon was delivered.

I must, however, take some notice of Professor Huxley’s argument on this irrelevant issue, as it affords a striking illustration of that superior method of ratiocina-

¹ “In der sog. Bergpredigt, Mt. 5-7, gibt sich eine, auf Grund einer wirklichen Rede von fundamentaler Bedeutung sich erhebende, kunstreich gegliederte Mosaiarbeit.”

tion in these matters on which he prides himself. I need not trouble the reader much on the questions he raises as to the relations of the first three Gospels. Any one who cares to see a full and thorough discussion of that difficult question, conducted with a complete knowledge of foreign criticism on the subject, and at the same time marked by the greatest lucidity and interest, may be referred to the admirable ‘Introduction to the New Testament’ by Dr. Salmon, who, like Professor Huxley, is a Fellow of the Royal Society, and who became eminent as one of the first mathematicians of Europe before he became similarly eminent as a theologian. I am content here to let Professor Huxley’s assumptions pass, as I am only concerned to illustrate the fallacious character of the reasoning he founds upon them. He says²:—

“I am of opinion that there is the gravest reason for doubting whether the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ was ever preached, and whether the so-called ‘Lord’s Prayer’ was ever prayed, by Jesus of Nazareth. My reasons for this opinion are, among others, these:—There is now no doubt that the three synoptic Gospels, so far from being the work of three independent writers, are closely interdependent, and that in one of two ways. Either all three contain, as their foundation, versions, to a large extent verbally identical, of one and the same tradition; or two of them are

² ‘Science and Christian Tradition,’ pp. 272-274.

thus closely dependent on the third ; and the opinion of the majority of the best critics has of late years more and more converged towards the conviction that our canonical second Gospel (the so-called ' Mark's ' Gospel) is that which most closely represents the primitive groundwork of the three. That I take to be one of the most valuable results of New Testament criticism, of immeasurably greater importance than the discussion about dates and authorship. But if, as I believe to be the case, beyond any rational doubt or dispute, the second Gospel is the nearest extant representative of the oldest tradition, whether written or oral, how comes it that it contains neither the ' Sermon on the Mount ' nor the ' Lord's Prayer,' those typical embodiments, according to Dr. Wace, of the ' essential belief and cardinal teaching ' of Jesus ? "

I have quoted every word of this passage because I am anxious for the reader to estimate the value of Professor Huxley's own statement of his case. It is, as he says, the opinion of many critics of authority that a certain fixed tradition, written or oral, was used by the writers of the first three Gospels. In the first place, why this should prevent those three Gospels from being the work of " three independent writers " I am at a loss to conceive. If Mr. Froude, the late Professor Brewer, and the late Mr. Green each use the Rolls Calendars of the reign of Henry VIII., I do not see that this abolishes their individuality. Any historian who describes the Peloponnesian War uses the memoirs of that war written by Thucydides ; but Bishop Thirlwall

and Mr. Grote were, I presume, independent writers. But to pass to a more important point, that which is assumed is that a certain alleged tradition, written or oral, was the groundwork of our three first Gospels, and it is therefore older than they are. Let it be granted, for the sake of argument. But how does this prove that the tradition in question is " the oldest," so that anything which was not in it is thereby discredited ? It was, let us allow, an old tradition, used by the writers of the first three Gospels. But how does this fact raise the slightest presumption against the probability that there were other traditions, equally old, which they might use with equal justification so far as their scope required ?

Professor Huxley alleges, in short, and I do not care to dispute the allegation, that the first three Gospels embody a certain record older than themselves. But by what right does he ask me to accept this as evidence, or as affording even the slightest presumption, that there was no other ? Between his allegation in one sentence that the second Gospel " most closely represents the primitive groundwork of the three," and his allegation, in the next sentence but one, that " the second Gospel is the nearest extant representative of the oldest tradition," there is an absolute and palpable *non sequitur*. It is a mere

juggle of phrases, and upon this juggle the whole of his subsequent argument on this point depends. St. Mark's Gospel may very well represent the oldest tradition *relative to the common matter of the three*, without, therefore, necessarily representing "the oldest tradition" in such a sense as to be a touchstone for all other reports of our Lord's life. Professor Huxley must know very well that, from the time of Schleiermacher, many critics have believed in the existence of another document containing a collection of our Lord's discourses. Holtzmann concludes¹ that "under all the circumstances the hypothesis of two sources offers the most probable solution of the synoptical problem"; and it is surely incredible that no old traditions of our Lord's teaching should have existed beyond those which are common to the three Gospels. St. Luke, in fact, in that preface which Professor Huxley has no hesitation in using for his own purposes, says that "many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us"; but Professor Huxley asks us to assume that none of these records were old, and none trustworthy, but that particular one which furnishes a sort of skeleton to the first three Gospels. There is no evidence whatever, beyond Professor Huxley's private

¹ 'Lehrbuch,' second edition, 1886, p. 376.

judgment, for such an assumption. Nay, he himself tells us² that, according to Holtzmann, it is at present a "burning question" among critics "whether the relatively primitive narrative and the root of the other synoptic texts is contained in Matthew or in Mark." Yet while his own authority tells him that this is a burning question, he treats it as settled in favour of St. Mark, "beyond any rational doubt or dispute," and employs this assumption as sufficiently solid ground on which to rest his doubts of the genuineness of the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer!

But let us pass to another point in Professor Huxley's mode of argument. Let us grant, again for the sake of argument, his *non sequitur* that the second Gospel is the nearest extant representative of the oldest tradition. "How comes it," he asked, "that it contains neither the Sermon on the Mount nor the Lord's Prayer?" Well, that is a very interesting inquiry, which has, in point of fact, often been considered by Christian divines; and various answers are conceivable, equally reasonable and sufficient. If it was St. Mark's object to record our Lord's acts rather than His teaching, what right has Professor Huxley, from his purely human point of view, to find fault with him? If, from a Christian point of view, St. Mark

² 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 273.

was inspired by a divine guidance to present the most vivid, brief, and effective sketch possible of our Lord's action as a Saviour, and for that purpose to leave to another writer the description of our Lord as a Teacher, the phenomenon is not less satisfactorily explained. St. Mark, according to that tradition of the Church which Professor Huxley believes to be quite worthless, but which his authority Holtzmann does not, was in great measure the mouthpiece of St. Peter. Now St. Peter is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in his address to Cornelius, as summing up our Lord's life in these words: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him;" and this is very much the point of view represented in St. Mark's Gospel.

When, in fact, Professor Huxley asks,¹ in answer to Holtzmann, who is again unfavourable to his views, "what conceivable motive could 'Mark' have for omitting it?" the answers that arise are innumerable. Perhaps, as has been suggested, St. Mark was more concerned with acts than words; perhaps he wanted to be brief; perhaps he was writing for persons who wanted one kind of record

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 277, note.

and not another; and, above all, perhaps it was not so much a question of "omission" as of selection. It is really astonishing that this latter consideration never seems to cross the mind of Professor Huxley and writers like him. The Gospels are among the briefest biographies in the world. I have sometimes thought that there is evidence of something superhuman about them in the mere fact that, while human biographers labour through volumes in order to give us some idea of their subject, every one of the Gospels, occupying no more than a chapter or two in length of an ordinary biography, nevertheless gives us an image of our Lord sufficiently vivid to have made Him the living companion of all subsequent generations. But if "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" was to be told within the compass of the sixteen chapters of St. Mark, some selection had to be made out of the mass of our Lord's words and deeds as recorded by the tradition of those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." The very greatness and effectiveness of these four Gospels consist in this wonderful power of selection, like that by which a great artist depicts a character and a figure in half-a-dozen touches; and Professor Huxley may perhaps, to put the matter on its lowest level, find out a conceivable motive for St. Mark's

omissions when he can produce such an effective narrative as St. Mark's. As St. John says at the end of his Gospel, "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." So St. John, like St. Mark, had to make his selection, and selection involves omission.

But, after all, I venture to ask whether anything can be more preposterous than this supposition that because a certain tradition is the oldest authority, therefore every other authority is discredited? Boswell writes a *Life of Johnson*; therefore every record of Johnson's acts or words which is not in Boswell is to be suspected. Archdeacon Hare writes a *Life of Sterling* first, and Carlyle writes one afterwards; therefore nothing in Carlyle's life is to be trusted which was not also in the Archdeacon's. What seems to me so astonishing about Professor Huxley's articles is not the wildness of their conclusions, but the rottenness of their ratiocination. To take another instance¹:—

"'Luke' either knew the collection of loosely connected and aphoristic utterances which appear under the name of the 'Sermon on the Mount' in 'Matthew,' or he did not. If he did not, he must have been ignorant of the existence of such a document as our canonical 'Matthew,' a fact which

does not make for the genuineness, or the authority, of that book. If he did he has shown that he does not care for its authority on a matter of fact of no small importance; and that does not permit us to conceive that he believed the first Gospel to be the work of an authority to whom he ought to defer, let alone that of an apostolic eye-witness."

I pass by the description of the Sermon on the Mount as a "collection of loosely connected utterances," though it is a kind of begging of a very important question. But supposing St. Luke to have been ignorant of the existence of St. Matthew's Gospel, how does this reflect on the genuineness of that book unless we know, as no one does, that St. Matthew's Gospel was written before St. Luke's, and sufficiently long before it to have become known to him? Or, if he did know it, where is the disrespect to its authority in his having given for his own purposes an abridgment of that which St. Matthew gave more fully? Professor Huxley might almost seem dominated by the mechanical theory of inspiration which he denounces in his antagonists. He writes as if there were something absolutely sacred, neither to be altered nor added to, in the mere words of some old authority of which he conceives himself to be in possession. Dr. Abbott, with admirable labour, has had printed for him, in clear type, the words or bits of words which

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 276.

are common to the first three Gospels, and he seems immediately to adopt the anathema of the Book of Revelation, and to proclaim to every man, Evangelists and Apostles included, "if any man shall add unto these things, . . . and if any man shall take away from the words" of this "common tradition" of Dr. Abbott, he shall be forthwith scientifically excommunicated. I venture to submit, as a mere matter of common-sense, that if three persons used one document, it is the height of rashness to conclude that it contained nothing but what they all three quote; that it is not only possible but probable that, while certain parts were used by all, each may have used some parts as suitable to his own purpose which the others did not find suitable to theirs; and lastly, that the fact of there having been one such document in existence is so far from being evidence that there were no others, that it even creates some presumption that there were. In short, I must beg leave to represent, not so much that Professor Huxley's conclusions are wrong, but that there is absolutely no validity in the reasoning by which he endeavours to support them. It is not, in fact, reasoning at all, but mere presumption and guesswork, inconsistent, moreover, with all experience and common-sense.

Of course, if Professor Huxley's quibbles against the Sermon on the

Mount go to pieces, so do his cavils at the authenticity of the Lord's Prayer; and, indeed, on these two points I venture to think the case for which I was contending is carried by the mere fact that it seems necessary to Professor Huxley's position that he should dispute them. If he cannot maintain his ground without pushing his Agnosticism to such a length as to deny the substantial genuineness of the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer, I think he will be found to have allowed enough to satisfy reasonable men that his case must be a bad one. I shall not, therefore, waste more time on these points, as I must say something on his strange treatment of the third point in the evangelical records to which I referred, the story of the Passion. It is really difficult to take seriously what he says on this subject. He says¹:—

"I am not quite sure what Dr. Wace means by this. I am not aware that any one (with the exception of certain ancient heretics) has propounded doubts as to the reality of the Crucifixion; and certainly I have no inclination to argue about the precise accuracy of every detail of that pathetic story of suffering and wrong. But if Dr. Wace means, as I suppose he does, that that which, according to the orthodox view, happened after the Crucifixion, and which is, in a dogmatic sense, the most important part of the story, is founded on solid historical proofs, I must beg

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 278.

leave to express a diametrically opposite conviction."

Professor Huxley is not quite sure what I mean by the story of the Passion, but supposes I mean the story of the Resurrection! It is barely credible that he can have supposed anything of the kind; but by this gratuitous supposition he has again evaded the issue I proposed to him, and has shifted the argument to another topic which, however important in itself, is entirely irrelevant to the particular point in question. If he really supposed that when I said the Passion I meant the Resurrection, it is only another proof of his incapacity for strict argument, at least on these subjects. I not only used the expression "the story of the Passion," but I explicitly stated in my reply to him for what purpose I appealed to it. I said that "that story involves the most solemn attestation, again and again, of truths of which an Agnostic coolly says he knows nothing"; and I mentioned particularly our Lord's final utterance, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," as conveying our Lord's attestation, in His death-agony, to His relation to God as His Father. That exclamation is recorded by St. Luke; but let me remind the reader of what is recorded by St. Mark, upon whom Professor Huxley mainly relies. There we have the account of the agony in Gethsemane and of our

Lord's prayer to His Father; we have the solemn challenge of the high priest, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and our Lord's reply, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," with His immediate condemnation, on the ground that in this statement He had spoken blasphemy. On the cross, moreover, St. Mark records His affecting appeal to His Father: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All this solemn evidence Professor Huxley puts aside with the mere passing observation that he has "no inclination to argue about the precise accuracy of every detail of that pathetic story of suffering and wrong." But these prayers and declarations of our Lord are not mere details; they are of the very essence of the story of the Passion; and whether Professor Huxley is inclined to argue about them or not, he will find that all serious people will be influenced by them to the end of time, unless they can be shown to be unhistorical.

At all events, by refusing to consider their import, Professor Huxley has again, in the most flagrant manner, evaded my challenge. I not only mentioned specifically "the story of the Passion," but I explained what I meant by it; and Professor Huxley asked us to believe that he does not under-

stand what I referred to: he refuses to face that story, and he raises an irrelevant issue about the Resurrection. It is irrelevant, because the point specifically at issue between us is not the truth of the Christian creed, but the meaning of Agnosticism, and the responsibilities which Agnosticism involves. I say that whether Agnosticism be justifiable or not, it involves a denial of the beliefs in which Jesus lived and died. It would equally involve a denial of them had He never risen; and if Professor Huxley really thinks, therefore, that a denial of the Resurrection affects the evidence afforded by the Passion, he must be incapable of distinguishing between two successive and entirely distinct occurrences.

But the manner in which Professor Huxley has treated this irrelevant issue deserves perhaps a few words, for it is another characteristic specimen of his mode of argument. I note, by the way, that after referring to "the facts of the case as stated by the oldest extant narrative of them"—by which he means the story in St. Mark, though this is not a part of that common tradition of the three Gospels on which he relies; for, as he observes, the accounts in St. Matthew and St. Luke present marked variations from it—he adds¹:—

"I do not see why any one should have a word to say against the inherent probability of that narrative; and for my part, I am quite ready to accept it

"What do we find when the accounts of the events in question, contained in the three Synoptic Gospels, are compared together? In the oldest, there is a simple, straightforward statement which, for anything that I have to urge to the contrary, may be exactly true. In the other two, there is, round this possible and probable nucleus, a mass of accretions of the most questionable character.

"The cruelty of death by crucifixion depended very much upon its lingering character. If there were a support for the weight of the body, as not unfrequently was the practice, the pain during the first hours of the infliction was not, necessarily, extreme; nor need any serious physical symptoms, at once, arise from the wounds made by the nails in the hands and feet, supposing they were nailed, which was not invariably the case. When exhaustion set in, and hunger, thirst, and nervous irritation had done their work, the agony of the sufferer must have been terrible; and the more terrible that in the absence of any effectual disturbance of the machinery of physical life, it might be prolonged for many hours, or even days. Temperate, strong men, such as were the ordinary Galilean peasants, might live for several days on the cross. It is necessary to bear these facts in mind when we read the account contained in the fifteenth chapter of the second Gospel.

"Jesus was crucified at the third hour (xv. 25), and the narrative seems to imply that he died immediately after the ninth hour (ver. 34). In this case, he would have been crucified only six hours; and the time spent on the cross cannot have been much longer, because Joseph of Arimathæa must have gone to Pilate, made his preparations, and deposited the body in the rock-cut tomb before sunset, which, at that time of the year, was about the twelfth hour. That any one should die after only six hours' crucifixion could not have been at all in accordance with Pilate's large experience of the effects of that method of punishment. It, therefore, quite agrees with what might be expected that Pilate 'marvelled if he were already dead,' and required to be satisfied

¹ I subjoin the whole passage from 'Science and Christian Tradition,' pp. 279-282:—

as an historical fact, that so much and no more is positively known of the end of Jesus of Nazareth."

on this point by the testimony of the Roman officer who was in command of the execution party. Those who have paid attention to the extraordinarily difficult question, What are the indisputable signs of death?—will be able to estimate the value of the opinion of a rough soldier on such a subject; even if his report to the Procurator were in no wise affected by the fact that the friend of Jesus, who anxiously awaited his answer, was a man of influence and of wealth.

"The inanimate body, wrapped in linen, was deposited in a spacious,¹ cool rock chamber, the entrance of which was closed, not by a well-fitting door, but by a stone rolled against the opening, which would of course allow free passage of air. A little more than thirty-six hours afterwards (Friday, 6 P.M., to Sunday, 6 A.M., or a little after) three women visit the tomb and find it empty. And they are told by a young man 'arrayed in a white robe' that Jesus is gone to his native country of Galilee, and that the disciples and Peter will find him there.

"Thus it stands, plainly recorded, in the oldest tradition that, for any evidence to the contrary, the sepulchre may have been vacated at any time during the Friday or Saturday nights. If it is said that no Jew would have violated the Sabbath by taking the former course, it is to be recollected that Joseph of Arimathæa might well be familiar with that wise and liberal interpretation of the fourth commandment, which permitted works of mercy to men—nay, even the drawing of an ox or an ass out of a pit—on the Sabbath. At any rate, the Saturday night was free to the most scrupulous of observers of the Law.

"These are the facts of the case as stated by the oldest extant narrative of them. I do not see why any one should have a word to say against the inherent probability of that narrative; and, for my part, I am quite ready to accept it as an historical fact, that so much and no more is positively known of the end of Jesus of Nazareth. On what grounds can a reasonable man be asked to believe any more?

¹ Spacious, because a young man could sit in it "on the right side" (xvi. 5), and therefore with plenty of room to spare.

We have, then, the important admission that Professor Huxley has not a word to say against the historic credibility of the narrative in the 15th chapter of St. Mark, and accordingly he proceeds to quote its statements for the purpose of his argument. That argument, in brief, is that our Lord might very well have survived His crucifixion, have^e been removed still living to the tomb, have been taken out of it on the Friday or Saturday night by Joseph of Arimathæa, and have recovered and found His way to Galilee. So much Professor Huxley is prepared to believe, and he asks, "On what grounds can a reasonable man be asked to believe any more?" But a prior question is, On what grounds can a reasonable man be asked to believe as much as this? In the first place, if St. Mark's narrative is to be the basis of discussion, why does Professor Huxley leave out of account the scourging, with the indication of weakness in our Lord's inability to bear His cross, and treat Him as exposed to crucifixion in the condition simply of "temperate, strong men, such as were the ordinary Galilean peasants"? In the next

So far as the narrative in the first Gospel, on the one hand, and those in the third Gospel and the Acts, on the other, go beyond what is stated in the second Gospel, they are hopelessly discrepant with one another. And this is the more significant because the pregnant phrase 'some doubted,' in the first Gospel, is ignored in the third."

place, I am informed by good medical authority that he is quite mistaken in saying that "no serious physical symptoms need, at once, arise from the wounds made by the nails in the hands and feet," and that, on the contrary, very grave symptoms would ordinarily arise in the course of no long time from such severe wounds, left to fester, with the nails in them, for six hours. In the third place, Professor Huxley takes no account of the piercing of our Lord's side, and of the appearance of blood and water from the wound, which is solemnly attested by one witness. It is true that incident is not recorded by St. Mark; but Professor Huxley must disprove the witness before he can leave it out of account. But, lastly, if Professor Huxley's account of the matter be true, the first preaching of the Church must have been founded on a deliberate fraud, of which some at least of our Lord's most intimate friends were guilty, or to which they were accessory; and I thought that supposition was practically out of account among reasonable men.¹

Professor Huxley then argues as if he had only to deal with the further evidence of St. Paul. That, indeed, is evidence of a far more

momentous character than he recognises; but it is by no means the most important. It is beyond question that the Christian society, from the earliest moment of its existence, believed in our Lord's Resurrection. Baur frankly says that there is no doubt about the Church having been founded on this belief, though he cannot explain how the belief arose. If the Resurrection be a fact, the belief is explained; but it is certainly not explained by the supposition of a fraud on the part of Joseph of Arimathæa. As to Professor Huxley's assertion that the accounts in the three Gospels are "hopelessly discrepant," it is easily made and as easily denied; but it is out of all reason that Professor Huxley's bare assertion on such a point should outweigh the opinions of some of the most learned judges of evidence, who have thought no such thing. It would be absurd to attempt to discuss that momentous story as a side-issue in a review. It is enough to have pointed out that Professor Huxley discusses it without even taking into account the statements of the very narrative on which he relies. The manner in which he sets aside St. Paul is equally reckless:—

"According to his own showing, Paul, in the vigour of his manhood, with every means of becoming acquainted, at first hand, with the evidence of eye-witnesses, not merely refused to credit them, but 'persecuted

¹ I ought to have added, as was pointed out in a private letter by Archbishop Magee ('Life,' vol. ii. p. 266), that Professor Huxley's account would involve the participation of our Lord Himself in a deliberate fraud, which is inconceivable.

the Church of God and made havoc of it.' . . . Yet this strange man, because he has a vision one day, at once, and with equally headlong zeal, flies to the opposite pole of opinion."¹

"A vision!" The whole question is, What vision? How can Professor Huxley be sure that no vision could be of such a nature as to justify a man in acting on it? If, as we are told, our Lord personally appeared to St. Paul, spoke to him, and gave him specific commands, was he to disbelieve his own eyes and ears, as well as his own conscience, and go up to Jerusalem to cross-examine Peter and John and James? If the vision was a real one, he was at once under orders, and had to obey our Lord's injunctions. It is, to say the least, rash, if not presumptuous, for Professor Huxley to declare that such a vision as St. Paul had would not have convinced him; and at all events the question is not disposed of by calling the manifestation "a vision." Two things are certain about St. Paul. One is that he was in the confidence of the Pharisees, and was their trusted agent in persecuting the Christians; and the other is that he was afterwards in the confidence of the apostles, and knew all their side of the case. He holds, therefore, the unique position of having had equal access to all that could be alleged on both sides;

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 282.

and the result is that, being fully acquainted with all that the Pharisees could urge against the Resurrection, he nevertheless gave up his whole life to attesting its truth, and threw in his lot, at the cost of martyrdom, with those whom he had formerly persecuted. Professor Huxley reminds us that he did all this in the full vigour of manhood, and in spite of strong, and even violent, prejudices. This is not a witness to be put aside in Professor Huxley's offhand manner.

But the strangest part of Professor Huxley's article remains to be noticed; and so far as the main point at issue between us is concerned, I need hardly have noticed anything else. He proceeds to a long and intricate discussion, quite needless, as I think, for his main object, respecting the relations between the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Jewish and Gentile Christians, first in the time of Justin Martyr, and then of St. Paul. Into this discussion, in the course of which he makes assumptions which, as Holtzmann will tell him, are as much questioned by the German criticism on which he relies as by English theologians, it is unnecessary for me to follow him. The object of it is to establish a conclusion, which is all with which I am concerned. That conclusion is, that "if the primitive Nazarenes of whom the Acts speaks were orthodox Jews, what sort of pro-

bability can there be that Jesus was anything else?"¹ But what more is necessary for the purpose of my argument? To say, indeed, that this *a priori* probability places us "in a position to form a safe judgment of the limits within which the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth must have been confined,"² is to beg a great question, for it assumes that our Lord could not have transcended those limits unless His disciples transcended them simultaneously with Him. But if our Lord's beliefs were those of an orthodox Jew, we certainly know enough of them to be quite sure that they involved a denial of Professor Huxley's Agnosticism. An orthodox Jew certainly believed in God, and in his responsibility to God, and in a Divine Revelation and a Divine Law. It is, says Professor Huxley, "extremely probable" that He appealed "to those noble conceptions of religion which constituted the pith and kernel of the teaching of the great prophets of His nation seven hundred years earlier." But if so, His first principles involved the assertion of religious realities which an Agnostic refuses to acknowledge. Professor Huxley has, in fact, dragged his readers through this thorny question of Jewish and Gentile Christianity in order to establish, at the end of it, and as it seems quite uncon-

sciously, an essential part of the very allegation which I originally made. I said that a person who "knows nothing" of God asserts the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to have been unfounded, repudiates His example, and denies His authority. Professor Huxley, in order to answer this contention, offers to prove with great elaboration that Jesus was an orthodox Jew, and consequently that His belief did involve what an Agnostic rejects. How much beyond these elementary truths Jesus taught is a further and a distinct question. What I was concerned to maintain is, that a man cannot be an Agnostic with respect to even the elementary truths of religion without rejecting the example and authority of Jesus Christ; and Professor Huxley, though he still endeavours to avoid facing the fact, has established it by a roundabout method of his own.

I suppose I must also reply to Professor Huxley's further challenge respecting my belief in the story of the Gadarene swine, though the difficulty of which he makes so much seems to me too trivial to deserve serious notice. He says "there are two stories, one in 'Mark' and 'Luke,' and the other in 'Matthew.' In the former . . . there is one possessed man, in the latter there are two,"³ and he asks me which I believe? My answer is, that I believe both, and that

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 302.

² Ibid., p. 298.

³ Ibid., p. 304.

the supposition of there being any inconsistency between them can only arise on that mechanical view of inspiration from which Professor Huxley seems unable to shake himself free. Certainly "the most unabashed of reconcilers cannot well say that one man is the same as two, or two as one";¹ but no one need be abashed to say that the greater number includes the less, and that if two men met our Lord, one certainly did. If I go into the operating-theatre of King's College Hospital, and see an eminent surgeon perform a new or rare operation on one or two patients, and if I tell a friend afterwards that I saw the surgeon perform such and such an operation on a patient, will he feel in any perplexity if he meets another spectator half-an-hour afterwards who says he saw the operation performed on two patients? All that I should have been thinking of was the nature of the operation, which is as well described by reference to one patient as to half-a-dozen; and similarly St. Mark and St. Luke may have thought that the only important point was the nature of the miracle itself, and not the number of possessed men who were the subjects of it. It is quite unnecessary, therefore, for me to consider all the elaborate dilemmas in which Professor Huxley would en-

tangle me respecting the relative authority of the first three Gospels. As two includes one, and as both witnesses are in my judgment equally to be trusted, I adopt the supposition which includes the statements of both. It is a pure assumption that inspiration requires verbal accuracy in the reporting of every detail, and an assumption quite inconsistent with our usual tests of truth. Just as no miracle has saved the texts of the Scriptures from corruption in secondary points, so no miracle has been wrought to exclude the ordinary variations of truthful reporters in the Gospel narratives. But a miracle, in my belief, has been wrought, in inspiring four men to give, within the compass of their brief narratives, such a picture of the life and work and teaching, of the death and resurrection, of the Son of man as to illuminate all human existence for the future, and to enable men "to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing to have life through His name."

It is with different feelings from those which Professor Huxley provokes that I turn for a while to Mrs. Humphry Ward's article on 'The New Reformation.' Since he adopts that article as a sufficient confutation of mine, I feel obliged to notice it, though I am sorry to appear in any position of antagonism to its author. Apart from other considerations, I am under

¹ 'Science and Christian Tradition,' p. 306.

much obligation to Mrs. Ward for the valuable series of articles which she contributed to the 'Dictionary of Christian Biography,' under my editorship, upon the obscure but interesting history of the Goths in Spain. I trust that, in her account of the effect upon Robert Elsmere and Merriman of absorption in that barbarian scene, she is not describing her own experience and the source of her own aberrations. But I feel especially bound to treat her argument with consideration, and to waive any opposition which can be avoided. I am sorry that she too questions the possibility in this country of "a scientific—that is to say, an unprejudiced, an unbiassed—study of theology, under present conditions," and I should have hoped that she would have had too much confidence in her colleagues in the important work to which I refer to cast this slur upon them. Their labours have, in fact, been received by German scholars of all schools with sufficient appreciation to render their vindication unnecessary; and if Professor Huxley can extend his study of German theological literature much beyond Zeller's 'Vorträge' of "a quarter of a century ago," or Ritschl's writings of "nearly forty years ago," he will not find himself countenanced by Church historians in Germany in his contempt for the recent contributions of English scholars to early Church History.

However, it is the more easy for me to waive all differences of this nature with Mrs. Ward, because it is unnecessary for me to look beyond her article for its own refutation. Her main contention, or that at least for which Professor Huxley appeals to her, seems to be, that it is a mistake to suppose the rationalistic movement of Germany to have been defeated in the sphere of New Testament criticism, and she selects more particularly for her protest a recent statement in the 'Quarterly Review,' that this criticism, and particularly the movement led by Baur, is "an attack which has failed." The Quarterly Reviewer may be left to take care of himself; but I would only ask, What is the evidence which Mrs. Ward adduces to the contrary? It may be summed up in two words—a prophecy and a romance. She does not adduce any evidence that the Tübingen school, which is the one we are chiefly concerned with, did not fail to establish its specific contentions; on the contrary, she says (p. 472) that "history protested," and she goes on to prophesy the success of other speculations which arose from that protest; concluding with an imaginary sketch, like that with which 'Robert Elsmere' ends, of a "new Reformation preparing, struggling into utterance and being, all around us." "It is close upon us—it is prepared by all the forces of

history and mind—its rise sooner or later is inevitable.” This is prophecy, but it is not argument; and a little attention to Mrs. Ward’s own statements will exhibit a very different picture. The Christian representative in her dialogue exclaims:—

“What is the whole history of German criticism but a series of brilliant failures, from Strauss downwards? One theorist follows another—now Mark is uppermost as the Ur-Evangelist, now Matthew—now the Synoptics are sacrificed to St. John, now St. John to the Synoptics. Baur relegates one after another of the Epistles to the second century because his theory cannot do with them in the first. Harnack tells you that Baur’s theory is all wrong, and that Thessalonians and Philippians must go back again. Volkmar sweeps together Gospels and Epistles in a heap towards the middle of the second century as the earliest date for almost all of them; and Dr. Abbott, who, as we are told, has absorbed all the learning of the Germans, puts Mark before 70 A.D., Matthew just about 70 A.D., and Luke about 80 A.D.; Strauss’s mythical theory is dead and buried by common consent; Baur’s tendency theory is much the same; Renan will have none of the Tübingen school; Volkmar is already antiquated; and Pfleiderer’s fancies are now in the order of the day.”¹

A better statement could hardly be wanted of what is meant by an attack having failed; and now let the reader observe how Merriman in the dialogue meets it. Does he deny any of those allegations?

¹ ‘Nineteenth Century,’ March 1889, p. 462.

Not one. “Very well,” he says, “let us leave the matter there for the present. Suppose we go to the Old Testament;” and then he proceeds to dwell on the concessions made to the newest critical school of Germany by a few distinguished English divines at the Church Congress of 1888. I must, indeed, dispute Mrs. Ward’s representation of that rather one-sided debate as amounting to “a collapse of English orthodoxy,” or as justifying her statement that “the Church of England practically gives its verdict” in favour, for instance, of the school which regards the Pentateuch, or the Hexateuch, as “the peculiar product of that Jewish religious movement which, beginning with Josiah, . . . yields its final fruits long after the exile.”² Not only has the Church of England given no such verdict, but German criticism has as yet given no such verdict. For example, in the Introduction to the Old Testament by one of the first Hebrew scholars of Germany, Professor Hermann Strack, contained in the valuable ‘Handbook of the Theological Sciences,’ edited, with the assistance of several distinguished scholars, by Professor Zöckler, I find at p. 215 of the third edition, published in 1889, the following brief summary of what, in Dr. Strack’s opinion, is

² Ibid., pp. 464, 465.

the result of the controversy so far:—

“The future results of further labours in the field of Pentateuch criticism cannot, of course, be predicted in particulars. But, in spite of the great assent which the view of Graf and Wellhausen at present enjoys, we are nevertheless convinced that it will not permanently lead to any essential alteration in the conception which has hitherto prevailed of the history of Israel, and in particular of the work of Moses. On the other hand, one result will certainly remain, that the Pentateuch was not composed by Moses himself, but was compiled by later editors from various original sources. . . . But the very variety of these sources may be applied in favour of the credibility of the Pentateuch.”

In other words, it may be said that Dr. Strack regards it as established that “The Law of Moses” is a title of the same character as “The Psalms of David,” the whole collection being denominated from its principal author. But he is convinced that the general conclusions of the prevalent school of Old Testament criticism, which involve an entire subversion of our present conceptions of Old Testament history, will not be maintained. In the face of this opinion, it does not seem presumptuous to express an apprehension that the younger school of Hebrew scholars in England, of whose concessions Mrs. Ward makes so much, have gone too far and too fast; and, at all events, it is clear from what Dr. Strack says—and I might quote

also Delitzsch and Dillmann—that it is much too soon to assume that the school of whose conquests Mrs. Ward boasts is supreme. But, even supposing it were, what has this to do with the admitted and undoubted failures on the other side, in the field of New Testament criticism? If it be the fact, as Mrs. Ward does not deny, that not only Strauss’s but Baur’s theories and conclusions are now rejected; if it has been proved that Baur was entirely wrong in supposing that the greater part of the New Testament books were late productions, written with a controversial purpose—what is the use of appealing to the alleged success of the German critics in another field? If Baur is confuted, he is confuted, and there is an end of his theories; though he may have been useful, as rash theorists have often been, in stimulating investigation. In the same valuable Handbook of Dr. Zöckler’s, already quoted, I find, under the History of the Science of Introduction to the New Testament, the heading (p. 15, vol. i. pt. 2), “Result of the Controversy and End of the Tübingen School.”

“The Tübingen school,” the writer concludes (p. 20), “could not but fall as soon as its assumptions were recognised and given up. As Hilgenfeld confesses, ‘it went to an unjustifiable length, and inflicted too deep wounds on the Christian faith. . . . No enduring results in matters of substance have been produced by it.’”

Such is the judgment of an authoritative German Handbook on the writer to whom, in Merri-
man's opinion, "we owe all that
we really *know* at the present
moment about the New Testa-
ment"; as though the Christian
thought and life of eighteen hun-
dred years had produced no know-
ledge on that subject!

In fact, Mrs. Ward's comparison
seems to me to point in exactly
the opposite direction.

"I say to myself," says her spokes-
man (p. 466), "it has taken some
thirty years for German critical science
to conquer English opinion in the
matter of the Old Testament. . . .
How much longer will it take before
we feel the victory of the same science
. . . with regard to that history which
is the natural heir and successor of
the Jewish—the history of Christian
origins?"

Remembering that the main move-
ment of New Testament criticism
in Germany dates not thirty, but
more than fifty years back, and
that thirty years ago Baur's school
enjoyed the same applause in
Germany as that of Wellhausen
does now, does it not seem more
in conformity with experience and
with probability to anticipate that,
as the Germans themselves, with
longer experience, find they
had been too hasty in following
Baur, so, with an equally long
experience, they may find they
have similarly been too hasty in
accepting Wellhausen? The fever

of revolutionary criticism on the
New Testament was at its height
after thirty years, and the science
has subsided into comparative
health after twenty more. The
fever of the revolutionary criticism
of the Old Testament is now at its
height, but the parallel suggests a
similar return to a more sober and
common-sense state of mind. The
most famous name, in short, of
German New Testament criticism
is now associated with exploded
theories; and we are asked to shut
our eyes to this undoubted fact
because Mrs. Ward prophesies a
different fate for the name now
most famous in Old Testament
criticism. I prefer the evidence of
established fact to that of romantic
prophecy.

But these observations suggest
another consideration, which has
a very important bearing on that
general disparagement of English
theology and theologians which
Professor Huxley expresses so
offensively, and which Mrs. Ward
encourages. She and Professor
Huxley talk as if German the-
ology were all rationalistic, and
English theology alone conserva-
tive. Professor Huxley invites his
readers to study in Mrs. Ward's
article

"the results of critical investigation, as
it is carried out among those theologians
who are men of science and not mere
counsel for creeds"; and he appeals to
"the works of scholars and theologians
of the highest repute in the only two

countries, Holland and Germany, in which, at the present time, professors of theology are to be found, whose tenure of their posts does not depend upon the results to which their inquiries lead them."¹

Well, passing over the insult to theologians in all other countries, what is the consequence of this freedom in Germany itself? Is it seen that all learned and distinguished theologians in that country are of the opinions of Professor Huxley and Mrs. Ward? The quotations I have given will serve to illustrate the fact that the contrary is the case. If any one wants vigorous, learned, and satisfactory answers to Professor Huxley and Mrs. Ward, Germany is the best place to which he can go for them. There are plenty of professors and theologians in Germany who adhere substantially to the old Christian faith, and who are at least as distinguished, as learned, as laborious, as those who adhere to sceptical opinions. What is, by general consent, the most valuable and comprehensive work on Christian theology and Church history which the last two generations of German divines have produced? "It is Herzog's '*Real-Encyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*,' of which the second edition, in eighteen large volumes, was completed about five years ago. But it is edited and written

in harmony with the general belief of Protestant Christians. Who have done the chief exegetical work of the last two generations? On the rationalistic side, though not exclusively so, is the '*Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch*,' in which, however, at the present time, Dillmann represents an opposition on an important point to the view of Wellhausen respecting the Pentateuch; but on the other side we have Meyer on the New Testament—almost the standard work on the subject—Keil and Delitzsch on the Old Testament and a great part of the New, Lange's immense '*Bibelwerk*,' and the valuable '*Kurzgefasster Kommentar*' on the whole Scripture, including the Apocrypha, now in course of publication under the editorship of Professors Strack and Zöckler. The Germans have more time for theoretical investigations than English theologians, who generally have a great deal of practical work to do; and German professors, in their numerous universities, compete against one another in the race for the greatest novelty. But it was by German theologians that Baur was refuted; it is by German Hebraists like Strack that Wellhausen and Kuenen are now being best resisted.

When, in fact, Professor Huxley and Mrs. Ward would leave an impression that, because German theological chairs are not shackled

¹ '*Science and Christian Tradition*,' pp. 263, 266.

by articles like our own, therefore the best German thought and criticism is on the rationalistic side, they are conveying an entirely prejudiced representation of the facts. The effect of the German system is to make everything an open question—as though there were no such thing as a settled system of the spiritual universe, and no established facts in Christian history—and thus to enable any man of great ability, with a sceptical turn, to unsettle a generation and leave the edifice of belief to be built up again. But the edifice is, none the less, built up again, and Germans take as large a part in rebuilding it as in undermining it. Because Professor Huxley and Mrs. Ward can quote great German names on one side, let it not be forgotten that just as able German names can be quoted on the other side. Take, for instance, Harnack, to whom Mrs. Ward appeals, and whose ‘History of Dogmas’ Professor Huxley quotes. Harnack himself, in reviewing the history of his science, pays an honourable tribute to the late eminent divine Thomasius, whose ‘History of Dogmas’ was recently republished after his death, and who wrote in the devoutest spirit of the Lutheran communion. Of course Harnack regards his point of view as narrow and unsatisfactory; but he adds that “equally great are the valuable qualities of this work in particular,

in regard of its exemplarily clear exposition, its eminent learning, and the author’s living comprehension of religious problems.” A man who studies the history of Christian theology in Harnack without reference to Thomasius will do no justice to his subject.

But, says Mrs. Ward, there is no real historical apprehension in the orthodox writers, whether of Germany or England, and the whole problem is one of “historical translation.” Every statement, every apparent miracle, everything different from daily experience, must be translated into the language of that experience, or else we have not got real history. But this, it will be observed, under an ingenious disguise, is only the old method of assuming that nothing really miraculous can have happened, and that therefore everything which seems supernatural must be explained away into the natural. In other words, it is once more begging the whole question at issue. Mrs. Ward accuses orthodox writers of this fallacy; but it is really her own. Merriman is represented as saying that he learnt from his Oxford teachers that

“it was imperatively right to endeavour to disentangle miracle from history, the marvellous from the real, in a document of the fourth, or third, or second century. . . . But the contents of the New Testament, however marvellous and however apparently akin to what surrounds them on either side, were to be

treated from an entirely different point of view. In the one case there must be a desire on the part of the historian to discover the historical under the miraculous, or he would be failing in his duty as a sane and competent observer; in the other case there must be a desire, a strong 'affection,' on the part of the theologian, towards proving the miraculous to be historical, or he would be failing in his duty as a Christian."¹

Mrs. Ward has entirely mistaken the point of view of Christian science. Certainly if any occurrence, anywhere, can be explained by natural causes, there is a strong presumption that it ought to be so explained; for though a natural effect may be due in a given case to supernatural action, it is a fixed rule of philosophising, according to Newton, that we should not assume unknown causes when known ones suffice. But the whole case of the Christian reasoner is that the records of the New Testament defy any attempt to explain them by natural causes. The German critics Hase, Strauss, Baur, Hausrath, Keim, all have made the attempt, and each, in the opinion of the others, and finally of Pfleiderer, has offered an insufficient solution of the problem. The case of the Christian is not that the evidence ought not to be explained naturally, and translated into everyday experience, but that it cannot be. But it is Mrs. Ward who assumes beforehand that sim-

ply because the 'Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,' by that learned scholar and able writer, Dr. Edersheim, whose recent loss is so much to be deplored, does not "translate" all the Gospel narratives into natural occurrences, therefore it is essentially bad history. The story has been the same throughout. The whole German critical school, from the venerable Karl Hase—and much as I differ from his conclusions, I cannot mention without a tribute of respect and gratitude the name of that great scholar, the veteran of all these controversies, whose 'Leben Jesu,' published several years before Strauss was heard of, is still perhaps the most valuable book of reference on the subject—all, from that eminent man downwards, have by their own repeated confession started from the assumption that the miraculous is impossible, and that the Gospels must, by some device or other, be so interpreted as to explain it away. "Affection" there is and ought to be in orthodox writers for venerable, profound, and consoling beliefs; but they start from no such invincible prejudice, and they are pledged by their principles to accept whatever interpretation may be really most consonant with the facts.

I have only one word to say, finally, in reply to Professor Huxley. I am very glad to hear that he has always advocated the reading of

¹ 'Nineteenth Century,' March 1889, p. 457.

the Bible, and the diffusion of its study among the people; but I must say that he goes to work in a very strange way in order to promote this result. If he could succeed in persuading people that the Gospels are untrustworthy collections of legends, made by unknown authors, that St. Paul's Epistles were the writings of "a strange man," who had no sound capacity for judging of evidence, or, with Mrs. Ward's friends, that the Pentateuch is a late forgery of Jewish scribes, I do not think the people at large would be likely to follow his well-meant exhortations. But I venture to remind him that the English Church has anticipated his anxiety in this matter. Three hundred years ago, by one of the greatest strokes of real government ever exhibited, the public reading of the whole Bible was imposed upon Englishmen; and by the public reading of the Lessons on Sunday alone, the chief portions of the Bible, from first to last, have become stamped upon the minds of English-speaking people in a degree in which, as the Germans themselves acknowledge,¹ they are

¹ See the Preface to Riehm's well-known 'Dictionary of Biblical Antiquity,' first edition, 1877, where it is said: "German evangelical theology may, indeed, always claim the honour of being the pioneer and guide of the theologians of other nations in the scientific and learned investigations of the Bible. But this has been of little benefit to our own German national culture. Knowledge and understanding of the Bible, which

far behind us. He has too much reason for his lament over the melancholy spectacle presented by the intestine quarrels of Churchmen over matters of mere ceremonial. But when he argues from this that the clergy of our day "can have but little sympathy with the old evangelical doctrine of the 'open Bible,'" he might have remembered that our own generation of English divines has, by the labour of years, endeavoured at all events, whether successfully or not, to place the most correct version possible of the Holy Scriptures in the hands of the English people. I agree with him most cordially in seeing in the wide diffusion and the unprejudiced study of that sacred volume the best security for "true religion and sound learning." It is in the open Bible of England, in the general familiarity of all classes of Englishmen and Englishwomen with it, that the chief obstacle has been found to the spread of the fantastic critical theories by which he is fascinated; and, instead of Englishmen translating the Bible into the language of their natural experiences, it will in the future, as in the past, translate them and their experiences into a higher and a supernatural region.

constitute so essential an element of religious culture, remain its altogether weakest side. In this respect we Germans stand, for instance, far behind the English." This passage is reprinted in the second edition, 1893.

THE HISTORICAL CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The following article, from the 'Quarterly Review' of October 1886, will furnish, it is hoped, some useful information on the results of modern criticism respecting the New Testament. Professor Huxley has warned his readers, in one of the articles to which the preceding papers are a reply, "against any reliance upon Dr. Wace's statements as to the results arrived at by modern criticism," adding magisterially that "they are as gravely as surprisingly erroneous." The statements quoted in the following article, not only from Dr. Salmon but from Dr. Holtzmann, to whose authority Professor Huxley himself appeals, will enable the reader to estimate the justice of this warning, and to judge for himself of the state of the controversy. The following are the titles of the two works reviewed, the first being the standard English work on the subject, and the latter the standard German work from the rationalistic school:—

1. 'A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament'; being an expansion of Lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin. By George Salmon, D.D., F.R.S., Regius Professor of Divinity. Second edition. London, 1886.

2. 'Lehrbuch der historisch-critischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament.' Von H. J. Holtzmann, Dr. und ord. Professor der Theologie in Strassburg. Freiburg i. B., 1885.

DR. SALMON'S 'Historical Introduction to the New Testament' is one of those remarkable books which can only be produced at rare

intervals, and of which the importance depends on a singular combination in their subject-matter, their authorship, and the circumstances in which they appear. The subject-matter in this case is perhaps the most important which could claim attention in the present day, as it mainly concerns the authenticity and trustworthiness of some of the chief evidence on which our Christian faith is founded. That faith is not, indeed, wholly dependent on early documentary evidence, as it can appeal to broad historical facts in its support, above all to the continuous testimony of the Church and the Sacraments. But, at the same time, the documents which form the New Testament are practically indispensable to Christian faith, and an inquiry into their historical genuineness touches the very roots of our religion. At the present day this inquiry has assumed peculiar urgency, in consequence of circumstances presently to be noticed more particularly; and there is perhaps no

question of greater practical import in the current controversy between Christianity and Infidelity. It is a question of the facts with which we have to deal, and unless this preliminary point be in some measure settled, the great controversy can hardly be brought to a decisive issue.

It is of the utmost consequence that such an inquiry should be in hands which command full attention and confidence; and in this respect the volume before us answers the most stringent requirements which could be made. The name of Dr. Salmon is of European reputation, and the weight it carries on the present subject is all the greater, because that reputation was originally gained in another field of labour. Dr. Salmon's works have for many years been the standard treatises for advanced students in some of the highest branches of modern mathematical science. They still hold their ground, notwithstanding the great progress which has been made in the abstruse subjects of which some of them treat. They have been translated into two or three of the Continental languages; and the eminence they have won was marked, not long ago, by the election of their author to the rare distinction of a member of the French Institute. Dr. Salmon's modesty has precluded him from recording this and similar distinctions on his title-page, and

we suspect he would have found it difficult to make room for all of them, and that it was easier to omit them than to make a selection. But we are glad to see that in his second edition he has not omitted to describe himself as a member of our own Royal Society; and it ought to be borne in mind, in reading this book, that its author had become one of the most eminent men of science of our day before he had begun to acquire similar eminence as a theologian.

That it is not necessary, indeed, as Professor Huxley seemed to suggest in his recent controversy with Mr. Gladstone, to be a man of science in order to be capable of sound reasoning, is sufficiently shown by the examples of Bishop Butler and the late Bishop of Durham, to say nothing of the fact that there had been a great deal of good reasoning in the world before the foundation of the Royal Society. But considering the prevalent superstitious worship of science and its high priests, it must add to the attention a man can command if he is one of the initiated in this mystery. Dr. Salmon speaks with full authority in this respect, and he is one of the most eminent of the many examples around us, including the present President of the Royal Society, that profound scientific knowledge is fully compatible with a devout faith in the creed of Christianity. But apart

from the authority which in this respect his name commands, the tone of his argument exhibits the best aspects of scientific thought. Two or three volumes of sermons, which he had previously published, were conspicuous examples of the introduction of this scientific tone into theological discussion. It is to be feared that this is one reason for their having attracted less attention than they deserve; for few people are attracted by simple statements of truth, and even our leading men of science would hardly command so wide an audience if they did not condescend to some of the arts of rhetoric. But the chief and almost unique characteristic of Dr. Salmon's sermons is that they are a simple elucidation of truth. You start, as in some mathematical problem, from axioms so simple that they seem almost commonplaces, and are led on insensibly into the depths of some profound theological principle. There is nothing startling or even attractive about the opening methods of address; but before you are aware of it, you are convinced of some solemn truth of theology or religion. We hope Dr. Salmon will be encouraged to give us some more of these sermons, for they are eminently calculated to influence and convince thoughtful minds at the present day.

These qualities, however, are peculiarly valuable in dealing with

such a subject as that of the present volume, and they are not less conspicuously exhibited. By dint of persistent assertion, the opponents of Christian belief respecting the New Testament Scriptures have contrived to produce an impression, upon many minds, that its adherents or advocates are influenced by undue prejudice, and are incapable of judging scientifically of the questions at issue. The fact of which this impression is a perversion will be noticed in due course; and it will be seen that the real truth is, that the inveterate prejudice is on the part of the chief opponents of Christian tradition. But it is none the less valuable that the truth should be maintained, as in this volume, in a spirit which must impress every fair reader with the scientific calmness of the writer's spirit and method. "Although," says the author in his preface, "my work may be described as apologetic in the sense that its results agree in the main with the traditional belief of the Church, I can honestly say that I have not worked in the spirit of an advocate anxious to defend a foregone conclusion. I have aimed at making my investigations historical, and at asserting nothing but what the evidence, candidly weighed, seemed to warrant." The tone, no less than the method, of Dr. Salmon's argument fully sustains this claim, and engages from the outset the reader's

confidence. One feels one's self in the hands of a quiet and masterly guide, who is only concerned to point out to us the facts with which we have to deal, and who will not press a single conclusion merely because it conforms to his own inclinations or presumptions. On some secondary points, indeed, such as the date of the Apocalypse, his conclusions are more tentative than many would have wished; and sometimes we think he might well have been more decisive. But his reserve on these points is at least an illustration of the freedom and scientific character of his investigations, and adds weight to the decisive convictions to which he leads us on all points of importance. In discussing any question of criticism, Dr. Salmon writes in just the same manner as if he were investigating a problem in conic sections or the higher algebra, except that his discussion is marked by grave suggestions, and occasionally by enlivening observations, for which a mathematical work, except in the hands of the late Professor De Morgan, affords no opportunities.

It must not be supposed, indeed, because the argument is conducted in this scientific spirit, that the volume is severe and difficult in style. The circumstances under which it has been produced have combined with the author's natural genius to render it a delightful contrast to ordinary treatises on the

subject—as, for instance, to the learned but somewhat dreary 'Lehrbuch' we have named with it at the beginning of this article, in which Dr. Holtzmann presents the latest aspects of the school of criticism whose failure Dr. Salmon exhibits. The book is an expansion of lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin, and is marked consequently by the directness, simplicity, and liveliness which such lectures naturally assume in such hands. Dr. Salmon has done well to preserve the form of direct address in which they were cast, altering only the divisions necessitated by the length of oral lectures, and supplementing their contents. As the printing went on, he says, he found additions necessary, partly in order to take notice of things that had been published since the delivery of the lectures, and partly in order to include details which want of time had obliged him to omit, but which he was unwilling to pass unnoticed in his book. In this way the work has become a lively discussion of the historical question of the authorship and date of the whole New Testament; and a valuable lecture has been added on early Non-Canonical books, including the recently-discovered 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.' While meeting all the requirements of a scholar, the book is thus cast in a form which renders it attractive to the ordinary reader,

and it should command the attention of thoughtful laymen as much as of scholars and divines. Dr. Salmon, moreover, is richly endowed with the humour for which his countrymen were renowned before recent politics had clouded all Irish life with anxiety and bitterness, and his argument is constantly illustrated with humorous or witty passages. Such a capacity has its use in respect to the substance as well as to the style of such discussions; for it may be safely said that many a theory, English as well as German, noticed in these pages, would never have been propounded if its author had possessed a due perception of the ludicrous. There is a theory, for instance, respecting the Second Epistle of St. Peter, propounded by Dr. Abbott, which is exploded in these pages no less by the comic aspect in which it is placed than by the criticism with which it is exposed. So, again, in the following amusing description of the extent to which German and Dutch scepticism has gone, it is presented in a light which alone is sufficient to exhibit its unsoundness:—

“Baur,” says Dr. Salmon (p. 379), “is far from marking the lowest point of negative criticism. He found disciples who bettered his instruction, until it became as hard for a young professor, anxious to gain a reputation for ingenuity, to make a new assault on a New Testament book, as it is now for

an Alpine Club man to find in Switzerland a virgin peak to climb. The consequence has been that, in Holland, Scholten and others, who had been counted as leaders in the school of destructive criticism, have been obliged to come out in the character of Conservatives, striving to prove, in opposition to Loman, that there really did live such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, and that it is not true that every one of the Epistles ascribed to Paul is a forgery. And certainly it is not only to the orthodox that the doctrine that we have no genuine remains of Paul is inconvenient; it must also embarrass those who look for arguments to prove an Epistle to be un-Pauline. I leave these last to fight the battle with their more advanced brethren. . . . Let me say this, however, that I think young critics have been seduced into false tracks by the reputation which has been wrongly gained by the display of ingenuity in finding some new reason for doubting received opinions. A man is just as bad a critic who rejects what is genuine as who receives what is spurious. ‘Be ye good money-changers’ is a maxim which I have already told you was early applied to this subject. But if a bank clerk would be unfit for his work who allowed himself easily to be imposed upon by forged paper, he would be equally useless to his employers if he habitually pronounced every note which was tendered to him to be a forgery, every sovereign to be base metal. I quite disbelieve that the early Christian Church was so taken possession of by forgers that almost all its genuine remains were corrupted or lost, while the spurious formed the great bulk of what was thought worth preserving. The suspicions that have been expressed seem to me to pass the bounds of literary sanity. There are rogues in this world, and you do well to guard against them; but if you allow your mind to be poisoned by suspicion, and take every man for a rogue, why, the

rogues will conspire against you, and lock you up in a lunatic asylum."

But there are also circumstances which render the appearance of Dr. Salmon's book peculiarly opportune. There are many indications that we have reached a period when the results of modern criticism respecting the New Testament Scriptures may be fairly summed up. M. Renan's notorious work on the 'Origins of Christianity' implies in great measure this assumption. It exhibits the conviction of a keen, and in some respects sagacious, observer, that the great critical debate which has raged for so long in Germany is practically exhausted, and that the time has come for estimating its effect. Symptoms of the same feeling in Germany itself may be discerned in various publications, of which the object is to present a comprehensive view of the present position of critical investigations in all branches of theology. Four years ago we noticed in these pages the appearance of a valuable work of this character, under the title of a 'Handbook of the Theological Sciences,' edited by Professor Zöckler, of Greifswald, and it has since reached a second edition.¹ In four handsome volumes it gives a useful survey of the whole field of theological learning from the point of view of moderate orthodoxy. This has been followed by the

¹ Since, in 1893, a third.

commencement of a series of Theological Handbooks, which are apparently intended to afford at once a more complete and more independent review of the present state of theological science. The prospectus states that the series is designed to serve no party interests, and is not a compilation written from the point of view of a particular party, but that each Handbook stands independently on its own ground. The authors, who are recognised leaders in their own departments, propose to furnish strictly scientific works, which will give the reader as "objective" an account as possible of the present position of the various branches of theology. Three volumes have already appeared,²—one by Professor Harnack, on the 'Early History of Christian Dogmas,' one by Professor Weizsäcker, on the 'History of the Apostolic Age,' and the volume by Professor Holtzmann, named at the beginning of this article. The latter work was the first to be published; and both from the character of the series which it opens, and from its own nature, it has a special interest in respect to our present subject.

Dr. Holtzmann, as he mentions in his preface, had for twenty-seven years lectured on the subjects included in an Introduction to the New Testament, and he stands

² The series now comprises many volumes.

perhaps at the head of German scholars in this department of theological learning. In the useful annual 'Review of Theological Publications,' founded by Professor Pünjer, and afterwards edited by Professor Lipsius, he contributes the account of the literature relating to the New Testament; and in the important 'Theological Journal,' edited by Professors Harnack and Schürer, he reviewed in 1885 the first edition of Dr. Salmon's book. In the preface to his Introduction he describes it as his object to furnish a work which would afford a comprehensive survey of the present state of critical questions, and at the same time supply with sufficient completeness the subject-matter of controversy. His own point of view, which is decidedly rationalistic, is not disguised, but he has endeavoured to subordinate the expression of it to the purpose of giving a fair statement of every other view which has any scientific foundation. A rationalistic writer is too often disqualified, by the barrenness of his religious sympathies, from entering fully into the views of writers who are in harmony with the general course of Christian feeling; but so far as he understands them, such a writer is often, especially in Germany, free from any bias in reporting them. He looks on them with cool scientific eyes, and is under little inclination to give a distorted account of them.

When a man has abandoned old beliefs, he seems sometimes afflicted with a peculiar incapacity to look at them fairly, and consciously or unconsciously he gives them a twist which may serve to excuse him for rejecting them. This seems to us a special temptation of English rationalists. But a writer like Dr. Holtzmann is fairly free from any tendency of this kind. His essential fault, in which he is a marked representative of his school, is that his judgment is cold and mechanical. But he reviews the whole course of critical controversy with severe and unmoved temper, and is perfectly undisturbed amidst the most vital processes of dissection. He recognises that we have reached a time at which it is possible to estimate to a considerable degree the issue of the long critical debate; and for the purpose of forming such an estimate his Introduction is a valuable work of reference.

It will thus be seen, however, that Dr. Salmon's book appears at a time which, alike abroad and at home, is felt to be a favourable one for a judicial review of the great controversy in question. The late Bishop of Durham, in the preface to his great work on the Ignatian Epistles, expressed the belief that the destructive criticism of the last half-century is fast spending its force. To some extent, as will be seen in the sequel, Dr. Salmon may

be thought to be slaying the slain in his exposure of such theories as that of Baur. But it may be as well that such a *coup de grâce* should have been delayed until every plea that could be urged in support of the hypothesis had practically been exhausted. English divines have been sometimes reproached during the last half-century with paying insufficient attention to the attacks made by critical science upon traditional beliefs; and they were perhaps somewhat tardy in this respect. When, indeed, full notice was taken of such controversies, as in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' it received very inadequate attention; and even Dr. Holtzmann, in his comprehensive survey of the literature of his subject, pays no regard to the many important discussions contained in the Introductions to the New Testament Books in that Commentary. But the position assumed by English divines was very intelligible and excusable. They were like men who felt themselves in possession of an impregnable fortress, in the walls of which a disorganised host were striving, amidst the greatest confusion, to effect a practicable breach. It was not worth while, as long as partial and inconsistent assaults were being delivered, now on one side and now on the other, to bring all the forces of learning to bear on each attempt, especially as the attack of

one set of assailants was sure to be neutralised by a counter-movement on the part of some rivals or other. But the attack, as Bishop Lightfoot says, has now in great part spent its force, and the real value of each ambitious enterprise can be judged of. It is a great advantage that at such a time a book should be placed in the hands of English readers which pronounces a fair, comprehensive, and solid judgment upon the whole controversy. The publication, almost simultaneously, of Dr. Holtzmann's book, enables us to check at each point the statements of fact and opinion which Dr. Salmon advances, and thus secures us against any such danger of prejudice as even the most impartial writer may not always be able to escape. The result appears to us to afford a most remarkable confirmation of the truth of the views substantially held in the Church from the commencement, and at the same time to suggest most instructive considerations respecting other controversies still pending.

It may, perhaps, be worth observing that Dr. Holtzmann has borne conspicuous, though reluctant, testimony to the full acquaintance which Dr. Salmon commands with the course of German criticism. In the review in 'Schürer's Journal,' to which we have referred, he expresses a not unnatural vexation at Dr. Salmon's merciless, though by

no means unkind, exposure of some leading schools of German criticism; but in complaining of what he describes as its misrepresentations, he has to confess that it is in perfect harmony with the views expressed in the most widely-read journals and reviews in Germany itself.

"It is," he says, "some excuse for a foreigner who entertains his readers with such frivolous wit that his views are evidently obtained in very limited degree from his own study of German theology, and that for the rest he relies upon the judgments which are at present current and familiar in Germany itself. The journals and theological papers which are most read among us speak much the same language as he does; and, in fact, in strong contrast to the picture of German theology drawn by our author, they offer abundant examples that there is scarcely any contention of criticism, whether well-founded or not, which has not afforded some partisan of the prevalent Church influences an occasion to spring into the saddle as the champion of traditional prejudice."¹

This passage is interesting, in the testimony it affords of the strong reaction which prevails in Germany itself against the destructive school of criticism—a reaction which is full of encouragement for the future of religious thought and life, alike in that important country and elsewhere. But with respect to the insinuation against Dr. Salmon, that his view of the criticism he exposes is but parti-

ally derived from direct study of its sources, it seems an unfortunate argument that Dr. Salmon's account of it is in entire harmony with that of the most widely-read theological papers in Germany itself. The fact is that Dr. Salmon has taken particular pains throughout his work to deal directly and at first hand with all the German authors whom he quotes, and useful information respecting each of them is added in footnotes. It is an essential characteristic of his work that it is in no respect a compilation. No authority, ancient or modern, is employed without careful sifting, and the results presented are always independent and original, and sometimes novel. Dr. Holtzmann himself, however, is obliged to part from Dr. Salmon with some genial acknowledgments; and if there is something amusing in the condescension with which he confesses that he—even he—has learnt something from a professor at Dublin, we have chiefly to regret that what he has failed to learn is the secret of the liveliness and humour which he cannot help enjoying.

"And yet," he says (p. 400 of the Review), "it is no uninteresting book which the Dublin theologian offers us. In spite of its lack of compactness and division of subject-matter, it is enlivened by a certain freshness of conception, by humour and wit, and by a wealth of illustration which a wide historical knowledge and great ac-

¹ 'Theologische Literaturzeitung,' August 22, 1885, p. 399.

quaintance with English and French literature place at the writer's command. Even the special theological learning of the author, in spite of the limits already indicated to his judgment, is in no way to be lightly estimated. On not a few points I am indebted to the author for additions to my knowledge, and that not merely in respect to subjects which, from his Dublin point of view, are of more concern to him, and more accessible to him, than to myself."

In the twelfth number of the same Review for the current year, in an article on Dr. Westcott's 'Commentary on St. John's Epistles,' the editor, Dr. Harnack, said that "among German commentaries on the writings of the New Testament we possess few which, for richness of material, penetrating acumen, and independence of judgment, can be compared with this commentary of Westcott's. The exegetical works of this scholar and of Lightfoot may serve us for a model." When English theological scholarship commands this recognition in the same columns as Dr. Holtzmann's article, there is something almost comical in his surprise at Dr. Salmon's learning. But we are sure that Dr. Salmon will cheerfully accept the condescension, for the sake of the substantial testimony which it implies to the value of his book.

We are quite content, however, for our present purpose, to accept Dr. Holtzmann's invitation, in the

same article, to follow him in a review of the course of German criticism, instead of judging it simply in the light of the English method as represented by Dr. Salmon's book. This review occupies the central part of Dr. Holtzmann's 'Einleitung,' and is peculiarly instructive. The title of the chapter in question is 'The Canon and Protestantism,' and it is characteristic of his whole point of view, that the Canon appears to present itself to him as a kind of bugbear which it is the first duty of a sound critic to exorcise. There is indeed some truth in his contention, that there was a signal inconsistency in the manner in which some schools of Protestant theology, while renouncing the traditional authority of the Roman Church, rested their case on another tradition, that of the Canon, which they accepted almost blindfold. It was peculiarly the temptation of those Protestant Churches which were forced adrift from the historical continuity of Church order and life. Their break with the past in external organisation and succession was so marked that they were led to throw exaggerated emphasis on the independent authority of the Scriptures. In this country, where the sense of historic continuity was never broken, such exaggeration of the place held by the Canon has been but partial, and our best divines

have maintained a position more in harmony with that of the early Fathers, and in keeping with the statement of our article, that the Church is "a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ." Such a position justifies an inquiry at any moment into the nature of the witness borne by the Church from the earliest times, and practically rests the authority of the Canon upon the broad ground of historic fact. At the background of Professor Holtzmann's whole discussion there seems a notion that this simple view of the case is almost beyond the conception of his antagonists. He seems to imagine that he has to contend with people who regard the recognised Canon as determined for them once for all by some unknown dogmatic authority, so that it is their business henceforth never to look behind it, but simply to invent arguments, good or bad, in favour of its retention.

The presence of such a spectre in the mind of a theological scholar like Professor Holtzmann may go far to explain some of the extravagances of German speculation. To get rid of this artificial authority, German scholars have rushed to another extreme, and have found a delight in trying how completely they could emancipate themselves from dogmatic fetters. The progress of human thought exhibits a curious incapacity for straightforward progression. A straight line

is said not to exist in nature, and it certainly does not exist in the history of thought. Men seem never to advance from one centre of truth to its neighbour by the direct path, but by a series of zigzags, in which they swerve alternately from the right to the left. The ascent, we must suppose, is too difficult, or the distant truth too dazzling; but whatever the reason, this incapacity for direct progression is almost universal. Professor Holtzmann's discussion leaves the impression that his chief impulse is one of repulsion from the old dogmatic theory he denounces, and that the criticism in which he seeks a refuge is swinging wildly right and left, in search of the balance in which it will ultimately rest. Perverse as have been some of the aberrations of this criticism, we must own to a partial sympathy with its efforts. The German critics sometimes seem to us like bold riders in a hunting-field, repelled by the dictation of an arbitrary huntsman that they must all ride in one direction, if they are to find the fox. He may be quite right, but he is irritating in his manner, and they are provoked into jumping impossible fences all round the field, in order to prove that the fox has gone elsewhere. They tumble into sad ditches, and find out that the huntsman was right after all. But the result is at all events to make it quite certain that the fox did go,

off in the direction that the huntsman maintained; and as to the reckless riders, we may hope "that heaven may yet have more mercy than man on such a bold rider's soul."

However, though Dr. Holtzmann need not make quite so much of the achievement, it was a perfectly legitimate and even necessary step that when, in the eighteenth century, the struggle for existence against the Roman Church was over, and the materials for learned investigation became fully accessible, German critics, of whom perhaps Semler, who died in 1791, is the pioneer, should commence to scrutinise more closely the grounds on which the sacred books of our Canon held their authoritative position. They were as much open to free inquiry as the Papal authority to which our forefathers had submitted, and they had to stand the test of reason and history if they were to maintain their claims. There was, indeed, one essential point on which German criticism from the first went astray. Dr. Holtzmann quotes as a characteristic mark of advance the saying of Eichhorn, at the beginning of this century, that the "writings of the New Testament must be read in a human way and examined in a human way." This may be understood in a sound meaning, but Dr. Holtzmann immediately emphasises the error to which it was

exposed when he adds, in his own name, that "their origin and their collection were alike a human process." This is to beg the question in the most extravagant manner. Eichhorn says that we must examine the Scriptures by human faculties and by human methods. It certainly does not follow, as Dr. Holtzmann assumes, that we shall find none but human forces at work. The verdict of reason may be, that it has come into contact with something beyond and above reason; but this is a possibility which it has been the grand error of German criticism to ignore. Dr. Salmon has some excellent remarks on this point in his opening chapter. The question of inspiration is of course the question of miracle, and the impossibility of miracle became the first principle of the leading schools of German criticism.

"This principle," says Dr. Salmon (p. 8)—"namely, the absolute impossibility of miracle—is the basis of the investigations of the school, some of whose results must be examined in this course of lectures. Two of its leading writers, Strauss and Renan, in their prefaces, make the absolute rejection of the supernatural the foundation of their whole structure. Renan declares that he will accept a miracle as proved only if it is found that it will succeed on repetition, forgetting that in this case it would not be a miracle at all, but a newly-discovered natural law. Strauss equally, in his preface, declares it to be his fundamental principle that there was nothing super-

natural in the person or work of Jesus. The same thing may be said about a book which made some sensation on its publication a few years ago, 'Supernatural Religion.' The extreme captiousness of its criticism found no approval from respectable foreign reviewers, however little they might be entitled to be classed as believers in Revelation. Dates were assigned in it to some of our New Testament books so late as to shock any one who makes an attempt fairly to judge of evidence. And the reason is, that the author starts with the denial of the supernatural as his fixed principle. If that principle be, in his eyes, once threatened, all ordinary laws of probability must give way. It is necessary at the outset to call your attention to this fundamental principle of our opponents, because it explains their seeming want of candour; why it is that they are so unreasonably rigorous in their demands of proof of the authenticity of our books; why they meet with evasions proofs that seem to be demonstrative. It is because, to their minds, any solution of a difficulty is more probable than one which would concede that a miracle had really occurred."

It is the same unfounded assumption, in another aspect, which is involved in Dr. Holtzmann's comment on Eichhorn's maxim, and is at the root of the mistaken criticism of which he is the present representative. It is assumed that every phenomenon in the New Testament must be explained on purely human principles, and without reference to the possibility of the minds of the sacred writers having been supernaturally influenced. This principle, however,

did not receive its full development until the appearance of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus' in 1835. De Wette, who died in 1849, affords, says Dr. Holtzmann, "a speaking mirror of the young and unsettled criticism of the period immediately before and after 1840," and "he shows, in his own example, how, with full critical tendency, it was possible in the main to arrive at results which appear readily reconcilable with traditional conceptions" (p. 182). In fact, like some of the Fathers in the early Church, De Wette entertained doubts respecting the authenticity of certain books in the Canon; but on this subject, in Dr. Holtzmann's opinion, he represents no general revolt against traditional views. The real commencement of the kind of criticism which occasioned the chief controversies of the last half-century is regarded by Dr. Holtzmann as marked by the publication of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus.' This work, with its portentous design of revolutionising the whole conception of Christianity, indicates the growing feeling of rationalistic thought that it could do nothing by merely nibbling, as it were, at particular portions of the Canon or of Christian traditions. Those traditions were felt to form too strong and compact a body of organised thought and life to be seriously affected by a few doubts on points of detail. If the sacred documents were trustworthy on

the whole, it was felt, especially by Strauss, that the characteristic elements of Christian belief, and particularly the reality of miracles, could not be seriously contested. But, as Dr. Salmon says, the reality of such beliefs was assumed to be impossible, and the rationalistic genius of the day, stimulated by the current philosophy, was brooding over the problem of finding some natural explanation of the whole phenomenon of the New Testament literature. Strauss's attempt commanded attention, and exerted considerable fascination by its audacity; but it was felt, as Dr. Holtzmann says, even by those who were in sympathy with its object, that it dealt too recklessly with the broad and unquestionable evidence of fact, afforded not merely by the Gospels, but by other books of the New Testament.

But while rationalistic thought was in the ferment thus created, Ferdinand Christian Baur was elaborating a theory which, while answering the main purposes of that of Strauss, appeared to possess the documentary basis in which the latter had been deficient; and this theory took by storm the public to which it appealed. A review of it is made the starting-point of Dr. Salmon's book, and the position which he gives it is in harmony with that assigned to it by Dr. Holtzmann. Their accounts of it are substantially the

same, but to avoid all appearance of partiality we will take Dr. Holtzmann's. The theory marks, for several reasons, a memorable episode in the history of criticism; and it is only necessary to apprehend the facts which relate to it, as they are stated by one who is an admirer, and in great degree the disciple, of its founder, in order to appreciate the vivid illustration it affords of the points on which we are chiefly concerned to dwell. The following is Dr. Holtzmann's account of the origin of this famous theory; and we must beg the reader to bear in mind that it is an account given, not by a hostile critic, but by an ardent admirer:—

“The founder of the Tübingen school, F. C. Baur (who died in 1860), had taken his point of departure not so much, like Strauss, from Philosophy, as from History; and before Strauss had entered on the criticism of the Gospels, Baur had commenced the criticism of the New Testament from the other central point, examining in the Epistles of St. Paul the most direct and ancient records of Christianity. He had been led to them in the course of his study of Gnosticism, through his researches into the Homilies ascribed to the Roman Clement. In these Homilies he thought he discovered an abrupt opposition between Jewish and Pauline Christianity, in respect to which it was not easy to see how it could have been less in the preceding apostolic age. He investigated, accordingly, with more exactness the relation of St. Paul to the elder apostles, and found that the conception generally entertained of the apostolic age was a false one. It could in no way have been that golden age

of undisturbed harmony which it was generally represented. On the contrary, the utterances of Paul himself afforded clear proof of deep oppositions, and of vital struggles which that apostle had to maintain with the Jewish Christian party, and even with the older apostles. There was thus gained, at all events, a more concrete view of the import of the first vital controversy of Christianity, of its relation to Judaism, and of the modifications which it experienced in its passage to a heathen soil."

A stranger method of gaining an insight into the history of early Christianity could hardly be conceived. It will be observed that Baur's theory was not suggested to him by the study of the New Testament writings themselves—not even by those four Epistles of St. Paul which he afterwards selected as the documentary basis of his system. It was suggested to him by the Clementine Homilies. These Homilies, as Dr. Salmon explains, are not older than the very end of the second century. They are a kind of Christian romance, of which Clement of Rome is made the narrator. They are generally believed to have originated among a later sect of Ebionites, or Jewish Christian heretics, and they form a sort of controversial novel, in which St. Peter is represented as the Apostle of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and St. Paul is ignored, or even attacked, under the disguise of Simon Magus. Baur is struck, in this heretical romance, with the

bitter feeling against St. Paul entertained by the sect in which it arose; and, in Dr. Holtzmann's words, "does not see how this feeling could have been less in the apostolic age." That is to say, he does not see any improbability in reading back into the main current of apostolic thought the feelings which he finds cherished, about a hundred and fifty years later, in an obscure corner of the Christian world. The views and prejudices of Ebionite writers towards the end of the second century must, he assumes, have been those which animated apostles in the middle of the first. The theory is purely arbitrary. Not only was it not suggested by the Epistles of St. Paul, but it had to be forcibly read into them. Accordingly, those which will not bear the strain are summarily rejected as not genuine, and the whole New Testament is judged by a standard taken from a confessedly fanciful, as well as heretical, novel of a late date. The natural consequence is well described by Dr. Salmon as follows (p. 20):—

"In order to save his theory from destruction, Baur has been obliged to make a tolerably clean sweep of the documents. In four of Paul's Epistles some symptoms may be found which can be interpreted as exhibiting feelings of jealousy or soreness towards the elder apostles. But there is nothing of the kind in the other nine. The genuineness of these, therefore, must

be denied. The Acts of the Apostles represent Paul as on most friendly terms with Peter and James, and these apostles as taking his side in the controversy as to imposing Judaism on the Gentiles. The Acts, therefore, cannot be true history. Not only the discourses ascribed to Peter in the Acts, but the first Epistle, which the ancient Church unanimously accepted as Peter's, is thoroughly Pauline in doctrine. We must therefore disregard ancient testimony, and reject the Epistle. The earliest uninspired Christian document, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, confessedly belongs to the conciliatory school, Peter and Paul being placed in it on equal terms of reverence and honour. It, too, must be discarded. So, in like manner, go the Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, the former of whom writes to the Romans, 'I do not pretend to command you, like Peter or Paul.'

It is to be further borne in mind, however, that Baur prided himself on what he described as the "positive" character of this criticism, as distinguished from such negative criticism as that of De Wette. The criticism of his predecessors had, as it were, but picked holes in the old edifice of early Church history, leaving the main outlines of the old structure still standing. But Baur aspired to nothing less than a reconstruction of the whole building. He maintained that the Catholic Church of the latter part of the second century, instead of having grown up regularly on the lines traced out for it by the common teaching of the apostles, was the result of a compromise between two radically antagonistic

parties—those of Judaism and Paulinism, or what Dr. Holtzmann distinguishes as "a particularistic and universalistic conception of Christianity, the one legal, the other free." The Canonical and non-Canonical literature of early Christianity is all interpreted as consisting of memorials of this long struggle, which is supposed to have lasted till towards the end of the second century, and as marking the gradual stages of approach to an agreement. For the purpose of promoting a compromise, epistles and historical books were written which cast over apostolic history a colour of harmony which did not really exist, and the names of apostles and their companions were without scruple attached to such productions. This period of literary development was regarded as falling into three divisions. The first extended to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, and included the four Epistles of St. Paul which alone Baur reckoned as genuine, with the Apocalypse of St. John. In these the original Ebionitic Christianity and Paulinism confronted each other in their full extent. The second period extends over the next seventy years, or until about 140 A.D.; and includes the origin of the two great Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, which refer to the Jewish war under Hadrian, or to the years

132-135 A.D. To the same period belong the Acts of the Apostles and St. Mark, with the Epistle to the Hebrews, the supposed pseudo-Pauline Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles. The characteristic of this period was said to be that the first step was taken on both sides towards softening the original antagonism, the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians being invented for this purpose on the side of the Pauline party. Finally, in the third period, after 140, the conflicting Ebionitic and Gnostic extremes were rejected by the general feeling of the Church, and a final settlement of the controversy was arrived at, which is marked in practice at Rome by the association of "Peter and Paul" as joint founders of that Church, and in thought by the fourth Gospel. To this last period, accordingly, are assigned the writings which conclude the Canon—the Pastoral Epistles, and the Gospel and Epistles of St. John.

It might naturally be asked, What is the use of recalling so preposterous a theory, especially when, as we shall see, it is practically abandoned even by those who, like Dr. Holtzmann, look up to its author with admiration, and regard themselves as his successors? It possesses, however, one aspect of great practical interest and importance, upon which it is our main purpose at present to

dwell. This theory of Baur—as great a romance as the Clementine Homilies on which it is built—does not stand by itself, like the theory of Strauss, as the dream of a single mind, which passed away with its author. It became the foundation of an important school of German learning which to some extent still exists; and Baur is still looked up to as a great master by a band of able men who regard themselves as his followers, though they have been obliged, by the force of evidence, to relinquish his main positions. The theory seized a large part of the German critical and theological world by storm, and a band of impetuous critics attached themselves to their *Meister*, and worked out his theory into the minutest and most extravagant details. Dr. Salmon gives one of the strangest of these fantastic discoveries, which we observe that even Dr. Holtzmann still mentions with respect:—

"St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount makes our Lord speak of men who say 'Lord, Lord,' and who will, at the last day, appeal . . . to their doing of miracles in the name of Jesus, but who will be rejected by Him as doers of lawlessness (*ἀνομία*), whom He had never known. It may surprise you to hear that this sentence was coined by the Jewish-Christian author of the record as a protest against the opposition to the law made by Paul and his followers. And it may surprise you more to hear that St. Luke (xiii. 26) is highly complimented for the skill with which he turns this Jewish anti-Pauline

saying into one of a Pauline anti-Jewish character. He substitutes the word *ἀδικία*, 'injustice,' for *ἀνομία*, 'lawlessness,' and he directs the saying against the Jews, who will one day appeal to having eaten and drunk in the presence of Jesus, and to His having taught in their streets, but, notwithstanding, shall be told by Him to depart as doers, not of *ἀνομία*, but of iniquity, and shall break forth into loud weeping when they see people coming from the east and west, and north and south, and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while themselves are shut out."

One would think that people must have gone crazy over a theory before they could magnify such a microscopic variation into a serious illustration and support of their views.

But notwithstanding the original wildness of the theory, and the extravagance of some of its supporters, it still maintained such a place in German thought as to be treated by Dr. Holtzmann as the starting-point of subsequent criticism, to which all other schools are to be referred. He proceeds, in detailing the further course of criticism down to the present day, to describe it as a series of stages in the development of Baur's theory, or in opposition to it. Practically, however, his narrative is simply a record of the manner in which the main points of the theory were found, one by one, to be untenable. Dr. Hilgenfeld, for instance, who is described as remaining true to the critical views of the Tübingen

school in the wider sense, and who is one of its ablest representatives, is nevertheless described as recognising "that original Christianity did not consist of pure Ebionism, and that in the relation of Paul to the original apostles their common ground must not be overlooked; while to the four Epistles acknowledged by Baur three must be added as genuine, Thessalonians I., Philippians, and Philemon." But passing to the opponents of the school, we are introduced first to the "imaginative opposition," connected with the great name of Neander, which based its antagonism on Christian conviction and feeling, and dwelt on the immense gulf which separates the sacred writings of the Canon from the uninspired literature with which Baur's theory would class so many of them. Then follows the "dogmatic opposition," of which Von Hofmann in the past, and Dr. Bernhard Weiss in the present, are taken as representatives, and which starts from the assumption that the development of the Church must have been due, not to the action and reaction of contraries, but to the unfolding of an inherent unity. Then finally follows the "methodical opposition," represented by Reuss, Ewald, the venerable Church historian Karl Hase, and above all Ritschl, which meets Baur's contention by a fresh investigation, and a juster presentation, of the facts

which he had perverted. Ritschl, for example, showed that, as Dr. Salmon observes, a more careful examination of the Clementines shows that they did not emanate from the party which opposed St. Paul in his lifetime. According to Dr. Holtzmann's account of Ritschl's argument, "there arose, after the destruction of Jerusalem, an Essene Jewish Christianity, which Baur, in the course of his investigations into the Clementines, falsely conceived as a potent influence reaching back to the first apostolic Christianity." In other words, Baur not only endeavoured to reconstruct early Christianity by the light of a heretical romance of the end of the second century, but he misunderstood the very point in this romance on which his whole edifice rested.

What is the result at the present moment? We have mentioned the views which Baur maintained as to the date of most of our New Testament books, and it will be sufficient to compare them with the judgments pronounced by Dr. Holtzmann, who, as we have seen, is sufficiently disposed to follow "the master." It is not always easy to ascertain Dr. Holtzmann's precise views, for it is at once an advantage in his book that he in great measure endeavours to describe the views of others, and a disappointment that he so often reserves his own opinion. But enough may be

gathered for our present purpose. First of all, as to St. Paul's Epistles, he not only acknowledges the genuineness of Baur's four, but admits (p. 96) that the letters to the Thessalonians were written before the contest respecting the Law had commenced, and he appears also to recognise the Epistle to the Philippians, the Epistle to Philemon, and a portion, at all events, of the Epistle to the Colossians. His theory about the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians is, indeed, an extraordinary instance of the fanciful inventions which German critics are capable of indulging. These last Epistles present, as the reader will remember, a remarkable series of parallel expressions, doubtless owing to their being written about the same time for a similar purpose. But this is too simple an explanation to satisfy a critic like Dr. Holtzmann, and his theory is, that there was an original Epistle of St. Paul, now embedded, amidst interpolations, in the Epistle to the Colossians. Some ingenious writer made use of this as the basis on which to compose the Epistle to the Ephesians as it now stands. But when he had accomplished this forgery, he was so pleased with his handiwork that he thought a little of the same kind of development would improve the original Epistle. So he worked this up into a shape more resembling his own

handiwork in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the result was the present Epistle to the Colossians. We must suppose, since Dr. Holtzmann deems such a process possible, that it would be practicable to a German critic; but apart from other absurdities, which we will presently refer to, such an elaborate piece of mosaic forgery is inconceivable in any other quarter. However, with these admissions with respect to the Pauline Epistles, a great part of Baur's theory is already gone.

With respect to the first three Gospels and the Acts, Dr. Holtzmann acknowledges that the identity of the author of St. Luke's Gospel and of the Acts "stands perfectly firm." Moreover, he concludes that the author of the account of St. Paul's voyage to Rome at the close of the Acts is St. Luke himself; and though he struggles to escape from the consequences which this involves respecting both the whole of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St. Luke, the admission is practically decisive of the value of those two documents as records of apostolic tradition. There has been, again, a vast amount of controversy respecting the brief reference which Eusebius has preserved from Papias to the writings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But Dr. Holtzmann, no less than Dr. Salmon, admits (p. 114) that "Papias certainly knew our

synoptic Gospels, even if not under their present titles." This, of course, renders it impracticable for him to place our first two Gospels later than the time of the Flavian Cæsars—that is, the last thirty years of the first century—St. Luke and the Acts immediately following them; and his chief reason for putting them so late as this appears to be his assumption, that because they refer to the fall of Jerusalem, they must have been composed after that event; prophecy, on the arbitrary principle of which Dr. Salmon has exposed the unreasonableness, being assumed to be impossible. But what a mass of pretentious speculation, from Baur downwards, falls to the ground when it is thus admitted, even by one who is in great measure a disciple of that school, that the first two Gospels, at all events, are to be assigned to the first century, the third Gospel being, at the most, a little later, and great part of the Acts, at least, being contemporary with St. Paul!

But the admissions are not less striking and decisive, when coming from such a quarter, respecting the Gospel of St. John. This Gospel, it will be remembered, was represented by Baur as marking the ideal side of that reconciliation between Paulinism and Petrinism which was definitely completed after A.D. 140; while the practical side is represented by that association of Peter and Paul, as joint-founders

of the Roman Church, which is exhibited in the Epistle of Clement of Rome. But Dr. Holtzmann (p. 110) gives A.D. 93 as the earliest possible date for Clement's Epistle, and 125 as the latest, assigning similar limits to the so-called Epistle of Barnabas. The reconciliation is complete, therefore, at Rome at the beginning of the first century at latest, and the whole ground is thus cut away from that long process of adjustment which Baur supposed to have gone forward throughout the second century. But we further find Dr. Holtzmann admitting the existence in St. Clement's Epistle of a series of apparent points of contact with St. John's Gospel, and similar appearances in the Epistle of Barnabas. He does not acknowledge that this proves that these authors were actually in possession of St. John's Gospel, but he concludes that they are associated with that Gospel and with the Epistles of St. John "by a certain identity in the sphere of their conceptions, of contemporary sympathy, and of their spiritual atmosphere. John is not quoted, but we are within the Johannine movement." Or, as he describes it, we are in a Johannine nebula, though the star of the fourth Gospel has not yet emerged. But he admits without reserve that the fourth Gospel was in the hands of Justin Martyr, who flourished about A.D. 150 (pp. 449-453). Now, as

Christian tradition has always assigned the Gospel to the last years of St. John's life—that is, to the very end of the first century—is there any common-sense in plunging into this nebulous hypothesis in order to explain the prevalence of Johannine ideas in Clement and Barnabas, and the definite, even if sparing, use of the Gospel by Justin Martyr? Dr. Holtzmann, in short, admits the existence of phenomena, long and obstinately denied by critics, which are at once explained by one of the most direct and authoritative traditions in the Christian Church. To what can it be ascribed but to an "apologetic" tendency—with the sole difference that it is Baur, and not Christian tradition, for which the apology is offered—that he should still struggle against the obvious conclusion, that the old belief is the true one? As Dr. Salmon points out, in some very just and important observations, when criticism attempts to draw these fine chronological limits, it is palpably over-straining its resources, and is practically admitting the facts against which it has been struggling:—

"I must remark," he says (p. 118), "that the concessions which the later school of sceptical critics has been forced to make have evacuated the whole field in which critical science has a right to assert itself against tradition. We can well believe that there would be considerable difference be-

tween a document written in A.D. 60 and in 160; and therefore if the question were between two such dates, one who judged only by internal evidence might be justified in maintaining his opinion in opposition to external evidence. But now that all sober criticism has abandoned the extravagantly late dates which at one time were assigned to the Gospels, the difference between the contending parties becomes so small that mere criticism cannot without affectation pretend to be competent to give a decision. Take, for example, the difference between an orthodox critic, who is willing to believe that the fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John in extreme old age, towards the end of the first century, and a sceptical critic of the moderate school, who is willing to allow it to have been written early in the second century. It seems to me that this difference is smaller than criticism can reasonably pronounce upon. For I count it unreasonable to say that it is credible a book should have been written eighty years after our Lord's death, and incredible it should have been written only sixty; when we have scarcely any documentary evidence as to the history of the Church, or the progress of Christian thought during the interval. So I think that the gradual approaches which Baur's successors have been making to the traditional theory indicate that criticism will in the end find itself forced to acquiesce in the account of the origin of the Gospels which the Church has always received."

It appears to us that these simple but weighty observations mark the practical conclusion of the long and stormy critical debate we have been sketching. The reader will find in Dr. Salmon's pages an interesting and candid

guide in following the controversy on each book of the New Testament, and it would take us far beyond the limits of an article to follow him in detail. But having thus illustrated the general character and practical issue of the discussion, we are anxious to draw attention to one or two general considerations of importance which seem to arise from it. In the first place, it must be evident what practical significance arises from the mere fact of the collapse of the edifice which Baur erected amidst such excitement—an excitement of equal alarm on the one side and of applause on the other. We see one of the most ingenious, learned, and brilliant of German scholars devoting his lifetime to the elaboration of a theory of the origin of the Christian Church and of the Christian Scriptures, which was to take the place of traditional belief on the subject. It was to supply a positive and historical account of these momentous events, which would remove them from the sphere of the miraculous and supernatural, and bring them within the circle of ordinary human experience. Instead of dissipating them at once, like Strauss, into a cloud of myths, or endeavouring, like the older rationalists, to minimise the miraculous elements in them, it was to show step by step how they arose, and to account for even the

smallest details in their composition and expression. The attempt met the inclinations prompted by the dominant philosophy of the day in Germany, and was at once seized upon by a school of eager critics as the solution of the problem of Christianity. The primary assumptions of the school acquired in a short time the prestige of great critical discoveries, and in a few years more they began to be talked of in this country, by those who are in sympathy with the spirit by which they were originally prompted, as though they were the accepted results of German scholarship. Suggestions were insinuated in many lay circles that English divines and clergy were, from ignorance or self-interest, wedded to obsolete traditions, while a light was dawning on the Continent which would before long disperse the spectres of the ancient faith. Meanwhile, though the German scholars, with a conventionalism unworthy of their claims to candour, do their best to keep up the illusion of the greatness of the famous Tübingen school, the force of facts and of increasing evidence has been steadily compelling them not only to recede from particular positions maintained by Baur, but to recognise that his whole theory of early Church history is fallacious. One of the most striking illustrations of this result is afforded in a passage of Dr. Holtzmann's sum-

mary of the present position of criticism. He says (p. 200) that

“Baur's successor in the Tübingen chair, Carl Weizsäcker, describes it as a prejudice to suppose that in the post-apostolic age there were only Paulinists and legalising Jewish-Christians, and points to the broad basis of Christian life, on which the struggle of principles was decided beforehand. He observes that the original apostles had never been specifically opponents of Paul, although, as they remained Jews, they maintained a provisional restriction; but Gentile Christianity was so much the more recognised by them, as it was by no means the exclusive creation of St. Paul, but impulses towards it may be traced back to Barnabas and Apollos; and in places like Antioch and Rome communities free from obligation to the Jewish law had arisen without the action of Paul, forming a kind of uncultivated field of Gentile Christianity, for the occupation of which at a later date Paul and the Judaists alike could exert themselves.”

Baur's successor discovering, at this time of day, that the post-apostolic Church was not entirely composed of two antagonistic parties of Paulinists and anti-Paulinists, and that the elder apostles were not direct antagonists of Paul, affords a stranger commentary on the history and fame of the Tübingen school than could have been dreamed of by its opponents.

But in view of these results, it is surely time for Englishmen of all schools to ask themselves what is the value to be placed upon a kind of criticism which has proved

itself, in so conspicuous an instance, to be capable of such portentous errors. People have talked for some time past about German scholarship and German criticism as if it had some of the attributes of Papal infallibility, or as though, at all events, it should be treated with general deference and submission; and it turns out that the hypothesis which in recent times laid the chief claim to this respect started from a blunder, proceeded by shutting its eyes to facts, and ended in conclusions now proved to be preposterous. As we have already said, we entertain, in some respects, no ungenial feelings towards German critics; and, above all, we would guard ourselves against the hasty prejudice by which German theology and criticism, to which the world owes an incalculable debt, is too frequently confounded, in a wholly unjust condemnation, with the rash speculations of particular schools and periods. Dr. Salmon pays a just and generous tribute to the admirable labour and devotion which German critics of the sceptical school have bestowed on the books they would dethrone from their inspired authority.

"It is," he confesses (p. 129), "scarcely creditable to Christians that in recent years far more pains have been expended on the minute study of the New Testament writings by those who recognise in them no divine element, than by those who believe in their

inspiration. In fact, their very belief in inspiration, fixing the thoughts of Christians on the divine Author of the Bible, made them indifferent or even averse to a comparative examination of the work of the respective human authors of the sacred books. They were sure there could be no contradiction between them, and it was all one to their faith in what part of the Bible a statement was made, so that no practical object seemed to be gained by inquiring whether or not what was said by Matthew was said also by Mark. In modern times the study of the New Testament has been taken up by critics who, far from shutting their eyes to discrepancies, are eager to magnify into a contradiction the smallest indication they can discover of opposite 'tendencies' in the sacred books; and we must at least acknowledge the closeness and carefulness of their reading, and be willing in that respect to profit by their example."

The investigations of these critics have, moreover, thrown indirectly most valuable light on the history of the early Church, and on the development of thought exhibited in the books of the New Testament. They have compelled a more general and adequate recognition of the human side in the inspired writings, and have done much to enlarge and increase our capacity for following with intelligent sympathy the organic life of early Christianity. But all these valuable results ought no longer to be allowed to disguise the fact, that the characteristic motive and the main contention of the criticism in question have been based on an enormous error of judgment, and

that the labour and ingenuity we have acknowledged have been directed to the most perverse conclusions. That this is the fact is substantiated by the admissions of such unimpeachable witnesses as Dr. Holtzmann, and we should miss a most important lesson if we failed to recognise it, and to state it plainly. German criticism will always command respect and attention, but it ought never again, on subjects like these, to exert the spell which it threw over much theological speculation during the past thirty years. It has been proved, in its most fascinating and most successful form, to have led its followers into a ditch, and to have been, for its avowed purposes, no better than the blind leading the blind.

The moment is not an inopportune one for recalling this experience. Another sensational school of criticism has been rising into prominence during the last few years, which is attempting in respect to the Old Testament a somewhat similar enterprise to that which Baur attempted with the New. Wellhausen and his followers are similarly endeavouring to explain the Old Testament as a natural human development by turning it topsy-turvy, and would make out that the Law of Moses is the product and not the starting-point of Jewish life and history ; so that, as

it has been concisely put, in place of the expression, "the Law and the Prophets," we ought to speak of "the Prophets and the Law." This theory has been received with similar admiration in Germany to that which greeted the enterprise of Baur, and it has been echoed over here, in some quarters where more caution and sense of responsibility might have been expected, as the latest oracle of an infallible criticism. The history of the school of Baur will suggest to thoughtful minds the wisdom of exercising a good deal of patient reserve before allowing themselves to be much disturbed in either direction by this new hypothesis. It can hardly be supported with more brilliancy, or meet with more apparent success, than that of the Tübingen school ; and it may meet the same fate. The researches it stimulates may bring to light many valuable results, and may lead to a better apprehension of Jewish history and of the Jewish Scriptures. But we are justified, by the experience on which we have been dwelling, in looking with suspicion on a German attempt, however brilliant, to overthrow the fundamental conceptions of our traditional belief. Such criticism has been proved, in a matter far more accessible to its resources, capable of an entire failure of judgment ; and a presumption is thus established for

the present against its claims to deference in a new enterprise.

It is not less important, however, to indicate, before we dismiss the subject, the point in which this error of judgment consists. It lies in the failure of such critics to enter into the dominant spirit and main purport of the writings with which they are dealing, and in the consequent concentration of their attention on mere secondary details. We have noticed the cold and mechanical tone of criticism which marks Dr. Holtzmann's learned work, and it is eminently characteristic of the defect to which we refer. Having carefully read through his volume, word for word, we should find it difficult to point to half-a-dozen passages in which he betrays any sense of the intense spiritual life, and the burning Christian thought, which, at any rate, are the most characteristic features of the writings with which he has to deal. His theory, already mentioned, of the origin of the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, is a conspicuous instance in point. It comes to this, that some post-apostolic writer, getting possession of a letter of St. Paul's which forms the kernel of the present Epistle to the Colossians, proceeded to remould and expand it into the Epistle to the Ephesians, his main motive being inspired by his "ten-

dency" to gloss over the divergence between Pauline and Jewish Christianity. Now, side by side with this explanation, let us recall to the mind of the reader the following passage from the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which, as not being in that to the Colossians, must have been composed by the supposed inventor:—

"I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

Is that, we would ask, a passage which can conceivably be attributed to a partisan of the post-apostolic age, concerned mainly with facilitating the construction of a plausible *modus vivendi* between adherents and opponents of Judaistic views? A critic who fails to perceive that the first characteristic of

an Epistle such as that to the Ephesians is that it springs directly, in one earnest flow of ardent and practical devotion, from the heart of a writer of extraordinary depth of thought and feeling, and who can dissect it as though it were the cold-blooded compilation of a calculating pamphleteer—such a critic is disqualified for his task from the very outset. While he is labouring over a minute comparison of phrases and words and particles, the essential spirit is escaping him, and he is destitute of the first elements of a sound and broad judgment.

But perhaps the most conspicuous instance of this cardinal error in the criticism of Germany is to be seen in its treatment of the Gospel of St. John. One would never suppose, from reading the greater part of the discussion on this subject in books of Dr. Holtzmann's school, that the central interest of St. John's Gospel consisted in its intense and affecting representation of the personal character and work of the Saviour. We are overwhelmed with speculations as to the origin of the Logos doctrine, and with an endless mass of disputed and ever-disputable details, while all the time the main fact is left out of sight—the fact which has secured and still secures the hold of that Gospel over Christian hearts—that the Saviour lives and

speaks in its pages with a supreme power and reality. Dr. Holtzmann sums up a long discussion by saying (p. 436) that "the riddle of the fourth Gospel is solved, so far as it is capable of solution, by a correct apprehension of the course of history which is mirrored in it—of the whole past which Christianity lived through since the days of John the Baptist to the time of the Evangelist a hundred years later." Thus we read in the Acts (xix. 1-7) of persons who had been baptised into John's baptism being further baptised by Paul into the name of the Lord Jesus—or, in Dr. Holtzmann's language, of the merging of the school of John into the school of Christ; and the purpose of the narrative at the commencement of St. John's Gospel of the relations between the Baptist and our Lord is supposed to be to give this experience of Church history a basis in the life of our Lord Himself. Similarly, the account of our Lord's discourse with the Samaritan woman is said to be suggested by the conversion of the Samaritans by Philip, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The event referred to really occurred in the Church's life, but the author of the fourth Gospel represents it as an event in the life of our Lord, and transfers it to His days. Similarly, the eighth chapter, in which our Lord denounces the Jews as of their

father the devil, is to be understood in reference to the Gnostic idea of the double seed of mankind. The tenth chapter, with its exquisite parable of the Good Shepherd, is to be explained in reference to the requirements of the pastoral and episcopal office, and so on ; and our Lord's foreknowledge, as described in St. John's Gospel, of the future of His cause and of His Church, is to be explained by reference to the needs and the crisis of a far-advanced development of Christianity. Would it be possible for learned men to indulge in this solemn trifling if their attention were not diverted from the main and essential characteristics of the narrative ?

Renan has committed the same blunder—we do not know whether it ought not to be called a crime—in another form. He acknowledges the enormous difficulty of supposing that a Gospel so full of "grace and truth" can have been composed by a man who, as is evident, intended throughout to make it understood that he was the Apostle John, when he was no such person. But he is induced to overcome this difficulty by the aversion he feels from the "dry, metaphysical, flat, and impossible" discourses which the Gospel puts into the mouth of our Lord. Professor Holtzmann is superior to such an absurdity, and in one of

the few passages in his book which betray any sympathetic feeling, says that "the whole pathos of the discourses of Jesus exhausts itself in carrying out the thought that all salvation, temporal as well as eternal, is involved in faith in the single person of the Son of God" (p. 417). But this "pathos" involves the whole problem. Who invented—who could have invented—a picture at once so sublime and so moving, so lofty and yet so tender, so instinct with the most delicate human feelings as well as with the divinest life, as that which the fourth Gospel presents of our Lord ? All other considerations are secondary in comparison with this. It is perfectly clear from Dr. Holtzmann's discussion, in which he states at great length and with careful impartiality the various views which have been held, that critics are unable to agree on any single point which is decisive against the authorship of St. John. He himself says (p. 420), in summarising the history of criticism on the subject, that "a multitude of various standpoints presented themselves, and the Johannine question appeared more and more—'je länger je mehr'—an open one." But if at all an open one on the grounds of historical and literary criticism, it should be regarded as settled at once on grounds of practical and spiritual common-

sense. A thousand minor literary and historical improbabilities are less improbable than that the picture of the Saviour's acts and words in St. John's Gospel is the work of a second-century compiler—still worse, as Baur supposes, of an ecclesiastical romancer.

In a word, the whole "Tendency theory," which would explain the great mass of New Testament writings as composed for an oblique purpose, ought to have been intolerable from the outset to any one who could appreciate their main character, and the simple practical object by which they are obviously animated. We can only ascribe its acceptance to a kind of colour-blindness, which can discern nothing but a single ray of the spectrum in the white and brilliant light of the sun. It is worth bearing in mind also that, if such theories have any truth in them, it must be assumed that the Christian Church could supply, down to at least the year 140, persons otherwise wholly unknown, who were capable of producing works on a level with the highest productions of apostolic thought. Whoever will read Dr. Salmon's interesting account of the Apocryphal Gospels, and of other non-canonical books, will appreciate the probability of such a supposition. But critics like Dr. Holtzmann seem to have no eye for the gulf which, in point

of power and wisdom, separates inspired from uninspired writings, and one of the points he chiefly insists upon is the unreasonableness of supposing that there was any break or "fall" between apostolic and post-apostolic times. One of the first great facts, which must be patent to any sound criticism, is the reality and the magnitude of such a fall.¹

¹ I have considered myself bound, in consequence of Professor Huxley's death, to abstain from altering or developing the arguments of these Essays, and have reprinted them from their final form, with only the correction of a few verbal errors. But I cannot refrain from adding the following quotation from the Preface to the first volume of Dr. Harnack's 'Chronology of Ancient Christian Literature,' published in 1897; as it affords independent testimony, from the highest German authority, as to the results of the German criticism of recent years on this subject. He says (p. ix):—"The suppositions of the Baur school have now, we may almost say, been generally given up; but there remains in the criticism of the ancient Christian writings an undefined mistrust, the sort of proceeding which an unfavourable public prosecutor employs, or at least a petty sort of critical method, which is always fastening on little details, and trying to argue from them against the broader and more decisive considerations. In place of a criticism based on general principles of tendency, we have attempts to discover tendencies of all kinds, and to detect interpretations wholesale; or we have a scepticism which places the probable and the improbable on the same level. From the latter peculiarity one cannot entirely absolve even the distinguished contribution to New Testament criticism which we possess in Holtzmann's 'Introduction to the New Testament,' although it is a work which has eminently promoted the advance of unbiassed knowledge on this subject. But as a sort of supplement to it, we have in Jülicher's

In a word, the criticism which Dr. Salmon, in conjunction with the Bishop of Durham and Dr. Westcott, has, we believe, exploded, at least for this country, has failed from a cause which is well indicated in the title to which it aspired. Dr. Holtzmann (p. 179) dwells on the distinction between the "lower" and the "higher" criticism. The so-called lower criticism, of which he treats Bengel and Wetstein as representatives, concerned itself with manuscripts, translations, and other means of restoring the original text. But "the higher, the inner criticism, is a product of that Protestant science which had freed itself, in accordance with its principles, from every dogmatic influence upon its judgment." In theory,

'Introduction' a work which has already begun to sum up the amount of the reaction in the views of the last two decades. I do not hesitate to use the word 'reaction,' for things ought to be called by their right names; and in the criticism of the sources of primitive Christianity we are beyond question in the course of a movement of reaction towards tradition. . . . The chronological frame within which tradition has arranged the original documents is correct in all essential points, from the Pauline Epistles down to Irenæus, and compels the historical writer to disregard all hypotheses respecting the course of events which contradict this framework." In other words, as the result of fifty years of German criticism on this subject, Christian tradition as to the dates of the New Testament writings is, by the confession of the most eminent German theologian of the present day, fully rehabilitated. It is an example pregnant with warning and instruction.—*June 1902.*

it endeavours to penetrate into the inner and higher elements of the works which it criticises, and to judge them by the degree in which they conform to the standards thus established. But the higher criticism of Germany, as represented by such critics as Dr. Holtzmann and the Tübingen school, has conspicuously failed in this very attempt. They have remained at the very portals of apostolic and Christian thought, deterred by the distraction of a single, and after all a secondary and passing controversy, from penetrating to its centre. The real source of Christian life, devotion to a risen and living Saviour, with the consequent endeavour to exhibit in life the Spirit He bestows—this, which is the true motive of Gospels and Epistles alike—is obscured to them by an exaggerated apprehension of an episode in the history of the Christian Church; and they allow their eyes to be blinded by a confused romance of the second century to the blaze of spiritual, mental, and moral force by which the New Testament writings are distinguished from all others since apostolic times. It is all very well to be free from dogmatic prepossessions, but whoever is to interpret Christian writings, and distinguish the false from the spurious, must be in sympathy with essential Christian truth. Criticism is really

“high” in proportion as it can enter into the thought and heart of Apostles, in proportion as it is animated and controlled by the Spirit which inspired them, and can share the spiritual experiences by which they were moved. For this reason, the tradition of the Church, so far as it represents the spiritual judgment of Christians,

embodies, after all, a far “higher” criticism than that which has hitherto usurped its name. But its verdict needs to be vindicated from time to time by the best resources of learning or science, and this is the service which, for all intelligent English readers, has been so admirably performed by Dr. Salmon.

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